

# International Innovation in Education



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# INTERNATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION

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## PREFACE

Education is the only one phenomenon which touches all spheres of human life. Education is provided to learners in different styles in different countries. Experiments are also going on all over the world to give purposive education to the people. Twenty such innovative approaches are explained to make the readers actively participate in the educational enterprise.

The hill tribes of Thailand live in remote villages perched high in the mountains and hills, sometimes at altitudes of over 1000 metres. They have their own specific way of life, language, legends and culture. The HAE, Hill Areas Education Project, is a community-based project for the various hill peoples, which is managed by the Non-Formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education. It operates in nearly 600 villages in the 15 provinces of northern Thailand and is aimed at both adults and children. The curriculum reflects the culture and lifestyle of hill tribes. Through education it encourages forest preservation, better health and nutrition and pushes for community development programmes. The people and village leaders are directly consulted and the teacher often goes beyond his role as educator to respond to local needs. This spirit of selfreliance has been used to set up village groups and these village groups have completed hundreds of projects in hill villages. In 1994 on International Literacy Day, the HAE received UNESCO prize for its innovative educational work and its community-based approach to education for all.

SERVOL, Service Volunteered for All, is a community organisation of Trinidad and Tobago which initiated two successful programmes : Early childhood education for 2 to 5 year-olds and adolescent development and skills training centres for teenage drop-outs. SERVOL has convincingly demonstrated that the vicious circle of poverty, violence and despair can be broken. The pre-schools for 2 to 5 year -olds offer a creative curriculum that enables disadvantaged children to be more sociable and speak up in class when starting primary school. The teenagers that graduate from adolescent centres succeed in finding a job or finishing secondary school. Building on local resources, SERVOL has shown that

community members with few formal credentials can become fine educators and trainers. SERVOL recognises parents as the primary caregivers and sees education as the whole community's responsibility. In the International Year of the Family, 1994, UNESEO's programme 'Education for All Making it Work' has selected SERVOL as a showcase project because it works on all fronts to rebuild families and give the disadvantaged self-esteem and hope for the future.

Apla Vargh, 'our class', is a non-formal education programme designed by the Indian Institute of Education. Called PROPEL, Promoting Primary and Elementary Education, it has succeeded in reaching girls, often excluded from primary education by deeply rooted social customs. Local teachers, flexible hours, community involvement and modern pedagogical methods are among the keys to its success. This project shows that the education for rural girls is possible, when integrated to community life. Greater community awareness about the importance of education is a powerful tool to stem the tide of drop-outs and increase the quality of education. Parents will send their girls to school, when class hours are flexible and education is perceived as a way to a better life. Support programmes like creches, women's groups, adult literacy and training villagers to manage local education make PROPEL a comprehensive community-based and decentralised model of primary education that works. PROPEL is selected by UNESCO's programme 'Education For All, Making it Work', as a showcase project to promote education for rural girls in developing countries.

In rural Mali, where 80% of children never set foot in a classroom, Save the Children/USA launched the village School Programme realising that the parents needing help in the fields felt little incentive to send their children to a far away school that no longer guarantees a respectable white-collar job in the city. In spite of this reality, Save the Children/USA has succeeded in mobilising community support and starting schools in rural settings. One of the project's major achievements is the high enrolment of girls, traditionally the first ones to suffer from the deficiencies of the formal school system and the Tradition of early marriage. The village school proves that there is no insurmountable taboo with regard to the education of girls. The curriculum covers life skills relevant to

village realities and the school terms are adapted to the agricultural calendar. By working three hours a day they have time for productive activities. Teachers are paid by the villagers and trained by the Save the Children/USA and the National Institute of Pedagogy. With its low costs and promising results, the village school project may be one way to bring education to a majority of children. Village school has been selected by UNESCO's 'Education For All, Making it Work' as a showcase project to promote community-base education firmly entrenched in rural areas.

TOSTON, which means breakthrough, is a eighteen month programme which goes beyond literacy to live learners the means to define and solve problems, improve the health of their families, and start small-scale projects in response to local needs. Realising that the first pre-occupation of villagers may not be to learn how to read and write, but to improve their livelihood, TOSTAN has developed a programme of six modules, throughout which literacy is linked to life skills, and the learning method is participatory. Efficient teacher training, thoroughly tested educational materials and a whole language approach to reading and writing make TOSTAN method relevant for developing literacy programmes.

Life in Yuan Wei Country of China's Yunnan Province is hard, especially for women as it is a remote and rugged place. The land requires much work and the possibilities for women's education are limited. In 1990, The skills-based Literacy Programme for Women, backed by UNESCO, UNDP, the Yunnan Education Commission and the All China Women's Education moved into the area. Four fundamental principles serve as the cornerstones of the project self-reliance, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-improvement. By encouraging women to attend literacy and production courses, the programme evinces them that they can increase their agricultural production. Then by increasing their production, women double or even triple their income. With this rise in earnings comes a rise in power and the ability to decide and play a part in China's rapid development. In fact, the programme is a unique matching of the women's aspirations and desires and the China's economic objectives.

In Bangladesh, traditions bind women to the home and keep them away from schools and jobs. SAPTAGRAM, a women's organisation, however has shown that these women can break free, study, start their own business, earn money and become independent. Contrary to widespread assumptions, poor rural women will take time off from their daily struggle for survival to study, if they see in education a tool to improve their lives. Saptagram illustrates convincingly that an educational project must, in order to succeed, integrate from the outset the needs and personal involvement of its beneficiaries. When women are brought together, they begin to question their lives, gained strength, overcome their fears and step into action. The need for education is felt only as they start to earn money. UNESCO's programme 'Education For All, Making it Work' has selected Saptagram as a showcase project to inspire all those who want to promote education for women in developing countries, particularly in Muslim societies.

Many remote and small villages in Upper Egypt are deprived of education and other Key services. UNICEF, the government of Egypt and local NGO's began a unique movement in 1992 to bring education, in the form of community schools, to the children of the region. Eighty per cent of the pupils are girls, those who have suffered the most from the lack of educational opportunities. The teachers or facilitators are all young women selected from the area. Each community school is a haven of creativity and dialogue with a daily schedule organised according to the needs and desires of the children. Class rooms are divided into activity corners and the children are continually encouraged to help each other, express their motivations and even assess one another and their facilitators. The community schools are a true chance for the children of the small villages, as they are putting responsibility and freedom of choice back into the hands of the deprived.

Several innovative approaches that are under implementation in India have also been explained some in detail and some in brief. These educational approaches will present a panoramic view of some initiatives by the state, the voluntary sector and various others to translate the goal of Education For All into a reality. The outlines which follow do not attempt to encapsulate the range and diversity of the Indian experience,

instead they are indicators of the complexity of a situation unrivalled. As thumbnail sketches they provide a glimpse of the processes at work and hint at the movement of change and they also explain about the people whose lives are changing with the spread of education.

We are interested in popularising the innovative approaches in education. We will be very happy if the readers of this book join the movement of EDUCATION FOR ALL with great interest and commitment.

**Dr. D. Bhaskara Rao**

**Dr. L. Rathaiah**

# 1

## HILL AREAS EDUCATION PROJECT

### Introduction

In the Akha villages of northern Thailand, a carved wooden gate traditionally marks the separation between the spirit world of the jungle and the human world. Another symbol, the Thai flag, marks the unity of the Thai nation. When outsiders arrive in these remote hamlets hidden amongst hills of tropical forest, children often run to their welcome, greeting them in Thai and raising their hands in the country's traditional salute of respect. Twenty years ago, such a welcome would have been unimaginable.

The Akha are one of the "chao khao", or hill peoples as they are known by the country's lowlanders. They have their own calendar, dress, language, myths, legends and ceremonies. Like the country's other ethnic minorities—the Karen, Lahu, Lisu, Yao and Meo, they live in remote villages perched at altitudes of some 500 metres.

Many hill tribe villages can only be reached by trekking for hours along serpentine mountain paths winding over steep slopes of forest and fields of upland rice, maize or other crops. Survival needs govern the lifestyle in these parts. Women rise before dawn to pound rice and prepare a fire for making tea. Families spend the day working in the fields and then gather for supper shortly after dusk. There is limited access to health and education. Many villages are too small to justify the building of primary schools.

As many children work in the fields for part of the day, a far more flexible learning system is required. One of the most comprehensive

schooling alternatives that exists in this remote region is the Hill Areas Education Project (HAE), a community-based project for children and adults from the country's six main hill tribes. Initially developed between 1980 and 1986 with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in some 45 villages representative of the country's six main tribes, HAE now operates in 600 villages spread across 15 provinces of northern Thailand. Run by the Ministry of Education's Non-formal Education Department, the project has attracted attention from the neighbouring Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the government is studing ways to reach its own hill tribe population.

Education and development are inseparable issues at HAE. The project simply could not exist without community participation. The teacher is a community worker and the school is known as the Village Education Centre (VEC), a kind of open house built by the villagers where children come to classes in the daytime and adults gather together at night. the curriculum reflects the hill tribes' culture and lifestyle., The learning process takes into account that Thai is the second language but, at the same time, gives the hill people a sense of civic identify as Thais. Furthermore, it encourages forest preservation, better health and nutrition and pushes for community development programmes.

### Towards integration

Although the documented presence of ethnic minorities in Thailand can be traced back over some 200 years, the largest wave of migration came from Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and China after 1950. Today's hill tribe population is estimated at approximately 550,000 people, with the Karen forming the largest tribal group (49 per cent). Scattered in villages that are often only accessible by foot, highlanders are mainly rice farmers, although nowadays, few villages are self-sufficient in food. According to statistics collected by the Hill Tribe Research Institute in the mid-1980s, about 35 per cent of the total hill tribe population has traditionally relied on the sale of opium crops for income, a figure that is likely to be as low as 15 per cent today. Opium was originally grown for medicinal proposes. With the extension of cash crops, food marketing has become increasingly widespread, and

growing numbers of people are migrating to lowland towns for seasonal jobs or relying on farm wage work for income.

An average village counts between 40 to 70 families. Each tribe has different ways of building huts: some are made of clay, some are constructed in bamboo or wooden planks with thatched roofs and usually raised high on stilts. Others, in a more "modern" style, are built in corrugated iron. Livestock, usually pigs, cattle and chickens, are kept beneath the house. The village's most important resident is the headman who is generally selected by the other adult male members of the community. The Akha and Karen headmen, however, inherit the position. In charge of administering village affairs, the headman may be assisted in his task by an informal council of elders and the religious leader or shaman. Although conditions vary from village to village, the sanitation, nutrition, health and education standards of the hill people fall far below the national average: the birthrate in the highlands is almost three times higher than that of the lowlands and infant mortality is almost double. The illiteracy rate is estimated at 88 per cent, compared with the national average of 7 per cent.

Much negative stereotyping surrounds the hill people, especially with regard to opium cultivation and deforestation. Traditionally, hill tribe farmers have used a type of slash-and-burn cultivation, and ancient forms of farming widely practiced by forest dwellers around the world. It involves the felling of forests on either a rotation or a pioneer system. Under low population pressure, experts say that it is ecologically sound. The Karen, for instance, use a rotational farming system and construct wet rice terraces wherever there is sufficient water for irrigation. But today, population pressure is putting increasing strain on the land that is no longer left to lie fallow long enough. Soil erosion is visible to all: strips of bare land contrast with the adjacent tropical forest and cultivated areas. This shifting cultivation method is not the only cause of deforestation: road construction, logging and illegal land exploitation have also contributed to the alarming reduction in Thailand's productive forest area. According to a report published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the country's forest area shrunk at an average annual rate of some 400,000 hectares during the 1980s.

Before 1950 the government had no specific policy towards the hill tribes but in 1951 a Committee for the Welfare of People in Remote Areas was set up. It generated much interest and the problems facing hill people became known. While measures were taken to ban the sale and consumption of opium, new cultivation methods were introduced and forest preservation became a major issue.

A specific government policy was announced in 1976 which strove to integrate the hill people into the Thai nation. This integration policy meant that government services become more widely available to hill people who, by the same token, had to increase their own awareness of such concepts as citizenship and the law. This means a range of obligations, from attending school to ceasing opium cultivation. The thrust of the government's policy has been to encourage the planting of alternative cash crops (red kidney beans, coffee, temperate fruits and leaf vegetables), and to reduce the rate of deforestation through replantation schemes and alternative agricultural techniques. Some of the most important development project in the highland areas are actually under the patronage of the royal family.

Much remains to be done still to assure the hill people their place within Thai society. Their knowledge of Thai is poor and just 60 per cent have Thai citizenship. Obtaining it demands time and requires proficiency in Thai as well as proof of permanent settlement. Their land, though, usually belongs to the country's forest reserves which makes them vulnerable to relocation.

In view of the lack of coherence and coordination between development programmes in the hill areas, the government drew up Master Plan for Highland Development. The second master plan, currently underway, aims to improve socioeconomic conditions in the hills, emphasize community participation in defining development and calls for further government health and education service.

"People have to be involved in government projects," says Prasert Chaiphikulsith, deputy director of the Hill Tribe Research Institute in Chaing Mai. "If a government agency can't understand the culture and language of each tribe, it can not work effectively."

## The Genesis of HAE

Education outside the formal school setting has long been valued in Thailand. Buddhist monks, village elders, local craftsmen and folk artists were educational role models for the vast majority of the population before and after a formal school system was established in the late nineteenth century. In 1940, when the first national census revealed that over 68 per cent of the nation's population were illiterate, the government launched a national literacy campaign and established an Adult Education Division within the Ministry of Education to manage the campaign and other programmes for those not in school. The Adult Functional Literacy for Hill Tribes Programme, launched in 1977 in co-operation with USAID was among these projects.

Hill children have limited or no educational options depending on where their village is located. Several governmental agencies run school programmes, although none has developed a special community-based project. The Department of Public Welfare, the Border Patrol Police, the Office for National Primary Education and religious organizations offer primary education, yet the needs of those in the hill areas are far from being met: currently, it is estimated that out of 4,000 villages in the hill areas, only 1,500 have access to education.

In many ways, the Adult Functional Literacy for Hill Tribes Programme can be considered as one of HAE's precursors. The curriculum was relevant to the hill people's lives and it provided a Grade Four equivalency in the formal system. A few years later, it became clear that the programme needed to be expanded and revised: the length of compulsory education had risen to six years; adults were being served while thousands of children were still out of school and the programme did not seriously address issues related to community development. "HAE was an attempt to improve this situation and develop an entire education system for the hill areas, with supervisors and a curriculum that would be upgraded to the equivalent of a sixth grade model in the formal system," explains Kenneth Kampe, USAID's adviser during the project's six-year pilot phase. The HAE project was put into action by the Non-formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education and the Public Welfare

Department of the Ministry of Technical and Economic Co-operation. During the pilot phase, a Project Secretariat was set up at the Northern Region Non-formal Education Centre in Lampang to design, coordinate and implement the HAE project.

HAE's original goals reflect a comprehensive, long-term approach to learning that covers the development of a curriculum and teaching materials for hill children and adults, the training of teachers in the education-for-development spirit and a supervision system which puts the accent on self-reliance. The project's flexible curriculum aims to give communities the tools to define and resolve their own needs, along with the teachers and various agencies working in the hill areas.

The project began by selecting forty-five project villages: all were remote, without a school, and the majority had little contact with government agencies. A total of 67 project teachers were selected and trained before taking up residence in the villages. Training included an introduction to the various hill tribes' cultural practices as well as a basic course in their respective languages. In some cases, teachers spent their first days in the villages sleeping outside under a tree before being welcomed into the headman's home. It was only after being accepted by the community that teachers were able to start discussing some of the concepts behind HAE and creating a local demand for education.

### **Concepts For Lifelong Learning**

There are several cornerstones to the HAE philosophy. The first is the belief that whatever different groups within a nation may have in common; their distinctiveness must be reflected in any proposed educational content and approach. The second is the conviction that the community must play an active role in the design and operation of any new service. The third is that education and development go hand in hand. To put this philosophy into action, the project relies on the following:

- The Village Education Centre (VEC). The name clearly differentiates these setting from the traditional school. A similar inviting atmosphere characterizes Village Education Centres from Village to

village. They are a central meeting point, a gathering place for special occasions, a quiet area for listening to learning tapes or simply somewhere to come to chat with the teacher. Constructed by the villagers with local materials (wood, bamboo, thatching grass), the centres belong to the community itself and are carefully maintained. Outside, flowers and vegetables are planted and kept up by the children and teacher. Inside, paper garlands are streamed across the ceilings; the walls are livened up by children's drawings, spelling and math charts, a map of Thailand and posters showing the local flora and fauna. Above the blackboard, framed photographs of the King and Queen, the Thai flag and the emerald Buddha (one of Thailand's national treasures) stand as symbols of national integration. The classroom is tidy. Textbooks fill the shelves along the walls. One corner is set aside for listening to radio programmes and tapes. The teacher's room and kitchen is generally set up in a room adjacent to this main classroom. A medicine cabinet contains a stock of basic first-aid supplies that the teacher knows how to use.

### **The Project has Several Key Methods.**

- The ashram approach stresses the teacher's continual readiness to provide education and assistance when required by the community - a community which learns both by itself and through the teacher. One of the main architects of the HAE project, Dr Kowit Vorapipatana, referred to these centres as ashrams, or "ah-som" in Thai. Traditionally, it is from similar shelters that resident monks provided knowledge and learning for the people. Today, this could be interpreted as an education for development approach, whereby everyone in the village is perceived as a learner. The educational model emphasizes the ability to think, to act and to solve problems.
- Teachers could be described as catalysts who give villagers a sense of confidence in their own ability to improve their living conditions. By their permanent presence in the village, they put the concept of lifelong learning into practice on a daily basis, both inside and outside the classroom.
- The Cluster: To counter the teachers' isolation in mountain villages and introduce a mutual supervision system, the project is

organized around the concept of clusters. A cluster of villages is a geographical group of 6 to 8 villages within approximately a half to five hour walk from each other. In each cluster, one centrally located village, which is generally larger than the others, is designated as the "core village" and operates as a type of headquarters for the whole area by dealing with the administration and coordination of HAE activities. A head teacher is appointed in each core village to supervise and support instructors in his/her area. Once a month, teachers from the whole cluster meet to discuss problems, strategies and administrative matters. Teachers take turns in hosting these meeting in their respective villages. This gives each teacher the opportunity to learn and practice organizational skills, as well as a chance to discover neighbouring hill tribe villages.

- The Village Committee includes representatives of the village and is responsible for determining the community's needs and specific policy, overseeing programmes in the village, and eventually, taking charge of the administration and operation of HAE activities.

### A Curriculum for the Hill People

When asked what she likes best about going to school, Silipon, 10, answers without hesitation: learning how to read. Another student proudly says that she is helping her father learn how to write in Thai. "It is very important for the young to learn how to read, write and communicate in Thai," says the village headman in Senmai, a Lahu village of about 300 people. "It allows them to travel safely outside the village." The chance to learn Thai has been one of the major motivations for the hill people's interest in education.

Recognized and accredited by the Ministry of Education in 1982, the HAE curriculum was designed by the Non-formal Education Department and members of the HAE Secretariat helped by teachers posted in the various pilot villages. "At first the teachers went to the villages without any learning materials, just to collect data and observe everyday situations," says Damiri Janapirakanit, HAE's secretary during the project's pilot phase. "We sat down with the villagers and they explained their problems to us. The curriculum was developed from this experience." University deans, Ministry of Education officials, researchers from the

Tribal Research Centre and teachers discussed the programme's concepts and content during several seminars. The curriculum was then drafted and redrafted to respond to hill children and adults' needs and lifestyles rather than end up as a pale copy of the one used in the formal system. According to several hill area experts, the national Thai curriculum is not easily adaptable to the situation in the highlands. The scarcity of resources imposes a different learning process: the multigrade system adopted in the HAE programme means one teacher, or at best two, for a classroom of up to 50 children. Learning materials had to take this into account and be adapted to the hill tribes.

The two-year adaptation process was not without hitches. "We came to a point where there was great controversy," Kenneth Kampe recalls. "We wanted to make this educational system responsive to people's needs but at the same time the ministry argued that it had to give these people the opportunity to move into higher-level secondary education. This is, of course, important but it happens in very few cases, it only concerns about 5 to 10 per cent of students." Although the curriculum accredited by the ministry is based on the National Primary Education Curriculum and shares common traits with it (namely with regards to Thai language and Mathematics), much of its content is oriented towards life in the hills. According to Tuenjai Deetes, a former HAE Secretariat member and now director of the Hill Areas Development Foundation, a non-governmental organization, "HAE is the best programme ever developed by the Ministry of Education because it is sensitive to local needs and involves people on development". The fact that the programme is accredited by the ministry is important: it recognizes the value and standard of the HAE curriculum and gives students the option of continuing further in the formal system. In its final form, the Primary Education for Hill Areas Communities Curriculum is an ungraded study programme of 6,000 unit-hours divided into two major areas:

- 1) The Basic Skills section forms 35 per cent of the curriculum, and includes Thai language and Mathematics. Both the above subjects are subdivided into two learning levels, each corresponding to two years of the primary school curriculum. There is no teaching of local languages. For all the children enrolled in the HAE project,

Thai is a second language. "Children have to understand the meaning of the words they are learning to write," explains one former HAE teacher. At the first level, learners write words to match pictures. The following level, however, demands greater skills in Thai comprehension and expression. With drawings and short captions, students must answer questions, draw conclusions and express themselves in Thai.

- 2) The Life and Social Experiences section accounts for 65 per cent of the curriculum and includes 19 basic units of common interest and importance to all hill peoples. The 20th unit is an open-ended local curriculum (13 per cent of the total) which is created jointly by both teacher and community.

The Life and Social Experience section covers a broad spectrum of concerns, ranging from the home, the community, food, illness, crops, forests, opium, tribal identity to Thai citizenship. Within each unit, the level runs from basic to advanced. Concepts are presented and then written about and concrete practical exercises enable learners to understand the issue at hand. By studying these units, learners progressively gain the ability to describe their local environment and become more aware of strategies to improve it. The unit on crops suggests ways of preventing plant disease, the section on mother and child deals with basic hygiene, the one on opium describes the dangers of addiction.

Skilled development workers are encouraged to participate throughout the project. When possible, the teacher invites forestry, health or agricultural officials to share their experiences with the class.

The open-ended or 20th unit has been the most problematic, partly because of the initiative it requires and the community knowledge that is needed. "The concept of a local curriculum is very good but the main problem is that teachers don't feel they can develop a valid one. They feel it is difficult to select one topic and develop it." According to Walaitat Woralul, who was involved in the project's pilot phase, some, however, have succeeded. In Mae Klang Luang, the teacher runs a clean village campaign for which participants receive credit hours. In Pakha Sukjai village, the teacher is trying to help adult learners market their weaving

to raise additional income. In another village, adult learners and the village committee agreed on programme to reduce opium addiction. Those who were successful in overcoming their addiction received a certain number of credit hours.

To accompany this vast curriculum, the project produced 133 individual textbooks, a figure subsequently reduced to 80 but still ten times higher than the original number of books the project had intended. Teachers provided some of the pictures for the textbooks that were all abundantly illustrated and printed in clear and easy type. The materials differed from those used in the standard primary curriculum in two respects: their content reflected hill tribe life and recognized that Thai was not the learners' mother tongue. Furthermore they aimed to serve self or group study. Exercise books were made separate from textbooks so that they could be shared by several students.

### The Evaluation Debate

The HAE curriculum has its own rhythm (students complete the various units at their own pace) and is ungraded. It takes children about six years (6,000 hours) to complete the curriculum, while adults can get through it in two years. Students must pass 60 per cent of the objectives set out in every unit before going on to the next one. Since the learning materials encourage self-study, they contain self-assessment exercises. Every village centre has a learner evaluation chart on the wall showing the curriculum objectives passed by each learner in Thai Language, Mathematics and Life and Social Experiences. At the end of the course, students receive a primary school certificate.

At any stage, HAE students can pass an equivalency exam enabling them to continue in the formal system. In practice, this seldom happens. Project specialists estimate that no more than 10 per cent reach Grade Six level within the formal system. HAE has been criticized by ministry officials for not turning out enough graduates. The drop-out rate is also especially high amongst girls, many of whom marry at a young age, must work all day in the fields, care for the younger members of the family and help with other household chores. The project has no specific measures

to keep girls in school. Some teenagers who can no longer attend daytime classes join the evening sessions for adults.

Flexibility is not always synonymous with continuity and teachers complain about irregular attendance. In some villages classes run morning and afternoon, in others, they are limited to half days. Children also have other activities and traditional ceremonies can also interrupt classes. In one village, following the death of a villager, classes were interrupted for ten days to appease the spirit of the dead man.

The project organizers argue that the number of graduates is not the sole criterion by which to measure success or failure. Since one of HAE's goals is to increase self-reliance and community participation, changes in the community have to be measured to their full extent. HAE does not just teach education in the classroom. It works with the community for community development," says a teacher.

Teachers have helped to set up Village Committees, chosen by the community, who take charge of activities and serve as a coordinating link between the government, private officials and the villagers. The committee is usually composed of the village headman, senior well-trusted villagers and young people willing to work for their village. Through meetings between village committee members, the teacher and local government officials, villages have set up co-operative stores, rice banks and medicine banks. Other projects include building village water supply systems (such as water tanks and bamboo-conducted water wells) and children's playgrounds.

According to an evaluation conducted in 45 villages by Mahidol University towards the end of the project's pilot phase, village groups had completed 361 projects in 44 villages. In each of the village committee work close together to discuss needs and requests to government agencies: from a need for blankets and clothes to inviting the Hill Tribe Welfare Department health officer.

### **Teachers For Development**

Teacher training college hardly prepares young graduates for the challenge of living in remote communities. "A teacher's work is very

demanding. They sometimes have to walk 60 kilometers of the road up to a village. They have to live in a different setting, speak a different language, eat different food and work almost 24 hours a day," says Sangwan Charnphichit, deputy director of the Non-formal Education Provincial Centre in Chiang Mai. "They are community development officers. Most of the time, they are the only government representative in the village."

In the classroom, teachers have to quickly become familiar with the HAE curriculum, adjust to managing children at different levels of learning, and learn to work with adult learners. Outside the classroom they must win the acceptance of the villagers, keep in liaison with government agencies and encourage the community to initiate development projects. "Teachers were used to the fromal school system. At first they had to adjust themselves and learn to think in a different way," says Damri Janpirakanit.

The first step is to win the villagers' confidence. "I spent a lot of time getting involved in people's activities," explains one teacher. "I attended village meetings; brought food to people's houses in the evening. Whenever villagers had a special event, like a wedding or a birth, I would help. After I helped deliver a baby, I was accepted."

"Everything in the village depends on the teacher," says Prapaporn Duang, a teacher in ban Pakaem, a village of 180 inhabitants. "They don't have sufficient food all year round or enough medicine. I try to help as much as I can. The children are genuinely interested in the classes. they come every day and they like to learn. I am proud of them."

Once a month, on a rota basis teachers attend a work meeting hosted by each of the villages in the cluster. This rotation gives teachers in the cluster a chance to become familiar with all the villages. The monthly meetings are a chance for teachers to discuss their day-to-day problems and concerns in their villages and to learn from one another. Organized by the head teacher, these meetings are generally attended by the district education officer (an official from the Non-formal education Department) and the chief of the operations unit, a government official from the Hill Tribe Welfare Department.

Whilst the project was in its pilot phase (1980-1986), teachers came from a range of backgrounds, from Grade Ten students to university graduates. Today, however, candidate must have a bachelor's degree in any discipline, although a teacher's degree is preferred. After working for two years as an HAE teacher, they become eligible to apply for a government officer position. Such requirements mean that few hill tribe people actually apply for posts and some people see the position mainly as a first step for joining the civil service. Today, HAE employs 650 teachers, half of whom are women. Between 20 to 30 per cent of the teachers are married.

During the pilot phase, teachers followed a two week pre-service training course before going to the village. The length of this course has now been cut to one week, partly due to budget restrictions, partly because a new teacher learns from other teachers in his/her cluster. The training curriculum varies from one province to another, depending on what is considered appropriate by the Non-formal Education provincial Centre in charge. Generally, HAE provides teachers with training manuals about education, health, agriculture and community development in hill areas, booklets working with different tribes and introductory materials on local languages. Upon assignment to a particular village, a teacher receives guidance from the head teacher in the cluster as well as advice from the outgoing teacher. They have a three month trial period and are required to stay in the village for 22 days a month. The remaining eight days give them a chance to return home.

The HAE project suffers from a high rate of teacher turnover, a problem partly linked to welfare: teachers are on one-year renewable contracts, but although their salaries (5,000 baht per month/US\$200) are equal to those of formal primary school teachers, they receive none of the latter's financial compensations such as hardship allowance or medical and health care for their families. "Because we cannot provide enough security and welfare, we lose a lot of teachers and people lose confidence in them," said the deputy director of the Chiang Mai Provincial Centre. A former HAE supervisor feels that the Non-formal Education Department doesn't always take teachers' and supervisors' recommendations into account."

Even during the pilot phase, teachers were paid by the government. According to the USAID advisor, this was stipulated in the grant package to ensure that the project would carry on after external funding stopped.

Very few hill people are HAE teachers, one of the aspects the government wishes to change. It should be noted that during the pilot phase, the Secretariat actively tried to recruit teachers from the hill tribes and others who could speak local languages. Preference was given to those who could speak a hill tribe language. But evidence showed that hill tribe teachers didn't always win the villagers' respect as effectively as teachers from the lowlands, and some tribes would not accept teachers who belonged to a different tribe. They would, however, accept teachers from the lowland. The present recruitment method involves an examination covering several disciplines (Thai, Math, non-formal education). According to the deputy director of the Non-formal Education Provincial Centre in Chiang Mai, few applications from hill tribe candidates make it through to the final stage.

To increase the number of hill tribe teachers, the project is currently testing a volunteer training programme for graduates of non-formal education programmes. If students stay in the village to pursue secondary education by distance learning, they can become assistants to HAE teachers and the government waives their school fees. Jangha, a teenager belonging to the Lahu tribe, is one promising example of this policy. He finished primary education in his village and is continuing secondary schooling through distance education. Every morning, he takes care of one part of the class, allowing the teacher to give more attention to another group. "I would like to get a bachelor's degree and help my community to improve its living conditions," he says.

### Crossroads

Since the end of the pilot phase in 1986, HAE has expanded to 600 villages. Some experienced observers, however, feel that the project might have suffered in quality and no real evaluation has been carried out since the end of the pilot phase.

During the pilot phase, a central coordinating body known as the HAE secretariat, located in the Northern Region Non-formal Education

Centre in Lampang, was responsible for the overall running of the project. When foreign funding ended and the pilot phase came to a close, the secretariat was dismantled in accordance with the project's initial outline. HAE ceased to enjoy its special status to become one of many programmes run by the Department of Non-formal Education. "During the pilot project period, there was a strong desire to improve everything. We had the time and energy to keep in contact with teachers so we could learn from each other," explains the head of the Hill Tribe Education Development section at the Lampang Northern Region Non-formal Education Centre. "When the pilot project finished and it was turned into a normal operation and became part of the bureaucratic system, supervisors and administrators changed and new people came in who had their own way of thinking, judging and operating."

Responsibilities for the project were divided out amongst the district, provincial and regional government levels. The district level is the one closest to the field: district officers directly oversee the running of HAE in their respective areas and meet with head teachers every month. The provincial level handles teacher hiring and training and coordinates operations in each province. Requests for more teachers or books, for example, are submitted by the various districts to the provincial office, which in turn submits a yearly budget proposal to the Department of Non-formal Education. The provincial centre works closely with the Hill Tribe Welfare Department to ensure that education and development are integrated at field level. The regional centre can be likened to a think-tank. It is in charge of research and suggests new orientations for the HAE project to the Non-formal Education Department. It feels, though, that it has lost much of the influence it had played during the pilot phase. "There is little long-term planning," says Dr Suchin Petcharngsa from the Northern Region Non-formal Education Centre in Lampang. "Unfortunately, we are not top of the list when it comes to budget allocation."

HAE has come to a kind of pause in the past two years Provincial centres have only received enough to cover teacher's salaries, with no additional funding to reprint materials or hire further teachers for the many villages that have expressed interest in opening a Village Education Centre.

Not surprisingly then, the teachers' most common complaint is not so much about salaries but the lack of materials that prevents them from teaching effectively. There are often not enough exercise books to go around the class. The textbooks are very tattered and many sets are incomplete. The lack of books makes self-study difficult. "If there were enough textbooks, children could study more at home," says one teacher who compensates for the lack of materials by going on frequent study excursions to the forest and fields.

One of the more potentially harmful consequences of budget restrictions has been a reduced emphasis on teacher training and support. "During the pilot phase, everything was more intensive, room training to supervision," says Walaitat Warlul, who conducted teacher training and evaluations during the pilot phase. "Since the project has been transferred to the regular system, there are constraints. Supervision can't be carried out as regularly and the quality of teacher training is lower."

The philosophy at the heart of HAE has become more difficult to promote. "In principle, the ashram concept (with the teacher promoting development) is still there, but in practice, it is not always followed by the new generation. You need a person or a group of people to give this vision," says a former HAE staff member who now works for a local NGO in the hill areas. "Supervisors expect to see teachers in the classroom whereas the HAE philosophy puts the teacher at the centre of the community. The HAE has in some ways become formalized."

### Future Directions

HAE's future is as much influenced by the management of the programme itself as by the broader process of development in the hill areas. If HAE has not produced many graduates, has it really helped communities advance? The sheer demand for schooling in hill areas is proof of the value families place on education. "Every village wants education, but we cannot respond to the demand", says Damri Janapirakanit. The fact that HAE started out in villages where no educational service existed cannot be overlooked. Despite the revision the programme requires, its basic philosophy and structure remain sound. The Village Education Centre is the result of a community choice and

investment. The cluster-wide supervision system is an effective way of developing networks among teachers, government agencies and villages. The presence of a full-time teacher with a genuine interest in the community's well-being has been a source of confidence and an impetus towards tightening village structures and initiating projects, from rice banks to co-operatives.

According to Kosit Kosanasanti, director of the Chiang Mai Non-formal Education Centre, "There are very obvious differences between those communities which have taken up the project and those which haven't, in terms of cleanliness, awareness about the environment, drug use as well as in the village's social organization. Children and adults who attend or have attended HAE classes also tend to be more expressive, outgoing and ready to express their ideas and opinions."

The extent to which teachers are capable of creating a more participatory atmosphere and build bridges with other government agencies varies from village to village. Communities that appear better prepared to improve their living conditions are those receiving steady support from a non-governmental organization. Some 38 NGOs work in the hill areas on issues ranging from agriculture to AIDS. The Centre for the Coordination of Non-governmental Tribal Development Organizations (CONTO) promotes understanding and co-operation among hill people, government officials and NGOs. When an NGO starts to work with a community to define its needs, it can file a request to the Provincial Non-formal Education Centre to run the HAE programme in that village. In some cases, the teachers are paid by the NGO, in others, by the organization. The latter might also provide funding for opening a village Education Centre. Several NGOs and foreign funded development projects use the HAE model: it is readily available and tends to fit their philosophy of promoting self-reliance and community participation.

The Hill Areas Development Foundation (HADF), for example, works in 28 villages of four different tribal groups. Founded in 1986 by Teunjai Deetes, an experienced volunteer teacher in the hills, the organization promotes contour farming, or Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT), which prevents the soil from eroding and revitalizes

the land. On several occasions, the international community has recognized her organization's work: at the 1992 Earth Summit, Deetes won a Global 500 award from the United Nations Environmental Programme; last year, she won the coveted Goldman Environmental Prize.

In all these communities, villagers can follow the HAE programme and the foundation's field staff make regular visits to villages to discuss people's concerns and ideas. It has run special training programmes and study tours for men and women about sustainable agriculture technology and reforestation. Gradually, these activities are helping hill tribes integrate by breaking some of the negative images associated with their slash-and-burn agricultural techniques and by improving their relationship with government authorities.

In Jagorna village, for example, Mr Jagor Airtae, a Lahu community leader, received a Good Citizen Award in 1993 for mobilizing hill people from five villages to help protect forest land through effective control of wildfire. He encouraged the practice of sustainable agriculture and the formation of a forest conservation network. Education must play a key role in furthering the development process: at a meeting with the foundation's staff, he therefore evoked the possibility of building a new, larger Village Education Centre that would serve as a resource centre for several villages. The Hill Area Development Foundation also pays particular attention to women's involvement in development, a dimension that is not specifically emphasized in the HAE material. As one specialist from the Tribal Research Institute writes, "the status of girls or daughters is generally beneath that of male offspring; consequently fewer resources are invested in them including food, health care and education."

The theme could be more thoroughly examined as part of the HAE revision commissioned by the Director-general of the Department of Non-formal Education to Northern Region Centre in Lampang. In its draft proposal, to be examined by the cabinet in 1995, it suggest the following improvements:

- 1) extend HAE from the current number of 600 village Education Centres to 2,500,
- 2) provide vocational training activities,

- 3) adapt the curriculum and materials to respond to new problems and needs of the hill tribes,
- 4) extend HAE to secondary education,
- 5) promote networking with other agencies and NGOs working in the hill areas,
- 6) set up a training institute for personnel working in the highlands.

These goals reflect the interdependence between education and development that lies at the heart of HAE, and the necessity for co-operation and understanding amongst HAE staff, government agencies and NGOs. "We want to strengthen the existing programme and emphasize the community-based approach," says Sombat Suwanpitak of the non-formal Education Department's planning division.

The government is also fully aware that HAE is financially attractive. Whereas a formal school costs approximately 1 million baht (US\$40,000) to construct, a village Education Centre cost 10,000 baht (US\$400). Learning materials for HAE cost 53 baht (US\$2.12) per student against 83 baht (US\$3.32) in the formal school. The revised HAE calls for an expenditure of 2800 million baht (\$112 million) over a seven-year period.

### **Identity and Social Change**

Chanchai Saensong has been associated with HAE as a teacher, and adviser and a secretariat member since the project's beginnings. He has seen his village change dramatically in the past decade. "You can hardly tell it's a hill tribe village," he explains, "We have roads, electricity, television, and videos. People no longer wear their traditional costumes." Although this represents an extreme, increasing, government presence and contact between highlands and lowlands have altered the hill tribes' perception of education, even in remote villages where living conditions remain extremely basic. This means that today, many parents would prefer to send their child to a formal school 45 minutes away from their home village because they feel it provides better quality education and more opportunity than HAE. "They are probably smarter than we are they can see more clearly than we can," says former USAID advisor Kenneth

Kampe. "That's probably what hill people need to be accepted in society.

Still, even if this happens, there are many remote villages still unreached by education where the chances of a formal primary school being built are slim. The questions that the project raised in its early days remain as valid as ever. How can education help hill people improve their living conditions and give them similar rights as lowlanders whilst retaining their specific cultural identity? Education experts realize the question is relevant to ethnic minorities throughout the world, especially at a time when communication technology and economic globalization have the potential to weaken cultural diversity even further. To be effective, basic education needs to meet the most disadvantaged on their own cultural, social and economic ground. Without question, contacts between hill tribes and lowland Thais will continue to increase, and it is crucial that the corner are not put at a disadvantage because they cannot communicate in Thai. At the same time however, integration is a two-way process. Recognition of hill tribe identity and culture will come with greater integration with the rest of the country and when more hill tribe people take up Thai citizenship.

Language is one of the most intimate components of identity, it is intricately linked to culture and history. Research points to the benefits of initial literacy training in the participant's mother tongue, although such a choice depends on a number of other factors. Given that HAE policy is being reviewed, it may be judicious to take a more critical look at linguistic policy and analyze to what extent HAE helps promote the cultural identity of each tribe while enabling them to communicate in Thai and identify with the Thai nation.

As integration continues, part of the effort to protect indigenous cultures will come from the tribes themselves. The Akha have been instrumental in defending their own culture. Ten years ago, a group founded the Association for Akha Education and Culture in Thailand (AFECT). It has developed an Akha script and transcribed some of the complex rituals governing Akha life. In ten remote Akha villages previously unreached by education, AFECT is currently running a non-formal programme using HAE materials alongside ones it has written itself in Akha language.

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Students learn Thai at the same time as they study their own history, proverbs, tradition and legends in their mother tongue. Its goal: to make children and adults proud of their own identity and give them the chance to take part in Thai society. "They have to learn Thai," says AFECT's director Aju Jupoh. "They can go to the lowlands, but they should feel they have their own identity and be proud of their origins and culture." Since classes began in 1994, they have generated visible enthusiasm on the part of children and adults alike. The association employs highly motivated, bilingual Akha teachers who receive a higher salary than HAE instructors recruited by the Non-formal Provincial Centre. "The children learn quickly because as soon as they don't understand something, I can translate it into Akha. We can get to the point directly," says one of the association's teachers. The benefits of a bilingual education should be more closely analyzed in partnership with NGOs with extensive experience in hill areas.

As part of this move, special emphasis should be put on recruiting hill tribe teachers since the latter have the potential to become important role models in their communities. Previous experience with hill tribe teachers should be more carefully analyzed. Associations with extensive experience in hill areas should contribute information. Measures could be considered such as lower initial entry requirements, accelerating teacher training and special incentives.

### **Conclusion**

On International Literacy Day 1994, HAE received a UNESCO prize for its innovative community-based approach to education. The prize is an encouragement for a project that has come to a turning point. Although the hill tribe population represents no more than 1 per cent of Thailand's population, the government's commitment to "Education for All" requires viable alternatives to reach these isolated groups. Under the country's seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992-1996), one of the Ministry of Education's top priorities is to provide compulsory education for the 2.5 per cent of the population who remain unreached. The hill tribes belong to this category, which also includes street children, women in the 15 to 40 year-old bracket, the rural poor and the disabled.

The number of hill villages still unreached by any form of education and the rapidly changing social context of the hill areas puts the government before a challenge. By and large, it is estimated that around 15 per cent of hill tribe people are literate. Illiteracy means greater vulnerability to poverty and exploitation. Unless minority people can participate in defining development in their communities, they are all the more likely to be defeated by labour migration, AIDS, profoundly altered traditional social structures and cultures. It is essential for education for minority people to promote national integration while giving a sense of identity and proud.

If HAE is to remain faithful to its principles of furthering self-reliance and education for development, its goals, concepts and methods have to be espoused at all levels. Because of its day-to-day contact with villagers, HAE has the potential not only to provide basic education, but to ensure that development programmes are evolved and implemented with community participation. If teachers have regular quality training and receive concrete support from the project's higher echelons, they have the potential to sensitize officials working in hill areas to villagers' culture, lifestyle and preoccupations. According to USAID's advisor during HAE's pilot phase, a genuine commitment existed during this period: "One of the reasons HAE succeed was not because of the money or the government's interest, but because of a small group of Thai idealists involved in the project. It is because of these people and their dedication that it worked."

HAE's future rests not only on quality improvements but also on the strength of its alliances with NGO's university specialists and government departments working in the hill areas. HAE has little meaning if it is not synonymous with better nutrition, better health and greater security. Environmental conservation, improved health and education services, control of opium production and better living standards cannot be achieved without ensuring the hill people's full involvement at all stages of the development process and this towards the goal of founding self-reliant sustainable communities.

If lifelong education is to become a reality, it also means providing further opportunities in the villages, from primary education to vocational

training. This is one of the proposals outlined in the revised package. "The problem today lies in the lack of educational services beyond primary level," says the deputy director of the Tribal Research Institute in Chiang Mai. "When hill children become teenagers, they feel there is no future. Boys just contribute to the ranks of unskilled labour in the towns and girls are employed as prostitutes. If education were more widely available, some of these problems could be prevented.

Beyond quality and partnerships, HAE cannot work without a well-defined vision that puts the community, and its advancement, at the centre of the learning process so that all participants grow in the process. Tuenjai Deetes, who moved to the hills for many years as a teacher and development worker, realizes that this means understanding the reasons that guide one's actions: "You cannot have a vision for education without a vision for society.

## 2

# EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### Introduction

Every year, the Poor Man's Christmas Dinner gathers the elite of Trinidad and Tobago in a prestigious hotel in Port of Spain. For US\$100, guests are served a bowl of soup, a loaf of bread and a glass of water. but they are really there to hear speeches by young men and women from the slums who have regained hope and power over their lives through a unique course in personal development and skills training.

The event is just one of the ways Servol -which stands for Service Volunteered for All-raises money for its programmes targeting children under 5, and teenagers between 16 and 19 who have done poorly at school. Since the organization was founded in 1970, the annual dinner has become its trademark and a platform for disadvantaged people to tell business leaders and politicians how they have managed to turn their lives around.

By listening to the marginalized and disadvantaged, Servol has defined its purpose, responded to needs and shared with other Caribbean islands its self-reliant approach to development. Programmes are community-based, stress parental involvement and encourage personal growth as a way of overcoming low self-esteem. Rough adolescents learn how to tune in to their emotions, teachers discover ways of nurturing children's creativity and parents are taught to be less authoritarian toward their offspring. The government recognized Servol's contribution in 1986 by asking it to extend its programmes throughout the country. Today,

Servol reaches these groups through three programmes it has perfected over the past two decades:

- The Early Childhood Education Programme (ECEP), to develop the creativity and spontaneity of 2 to 5 year olds. Communities set up pre-schools, Servol trains teachers and the government subsidizes their minimal salaries. Families pay TT\$20 (US\$3.50), a monthly fee, except in rural areas where the programme is free.
- The Adolescent Development Programme (ADP), a fourteen-week course to help teenagers become more self-aware, understand their emotions and develop positive attitudes. They also take literacy classes and an intensive course in parenting. This programme runs in centres set up by the community and staffed by Servol-trained instructors. Students pay TT\$50 (US\$9) a month. Servol helps indigent trainees find weekend jobs to cover the fee.
- The next step is the Adolescent Skills Training Programme. After the ADP course, trainees learn a trade by working in one of Servol's regional training centres for six to eight months.

Servol oversees 153 pre-schools for some 5,000 2 to 5 year-old children and 40 adolescent training centres reaching 3,000 teenagers a year. It also trains pre-school teachers from eleven Caribbean island. In 1992, Servol participated in a national task force on education. For the first time, community-based education and early childhood programmes were recognized as part of the education system.

Because it has developed in response to grassroots demands, Servol cannot be cloned into another context. But its holistic approach to human growth and its highly-personalized methods inspire community workers, teachers and policy-planners tackling urban crime, drugs and violence. Lessons can be drawn from power-sharing in communities and the juggling of personalities, interests and wills. It is increasingly relevant where scarce resources and the shortcoming of the formal system are leading to new, albeit fragile, alliances between nongovernmental organizations, government and the private sector. Servol's programmes are both remedial and preventive. Recognizing that the seeds of violence

are sown early, Servol tries to equip teenagers with the tools of parenting and young children from disadvantaged areas with as many resources as possible to start off on the right track in school. Servol can also contribute much to the current International Year of the Family, because of the importance it gives to early childhood development and parenting especially the involvement of fathers.

### Servol's Beginnings: A Culture of Ignorance

Servol had no grandiose beginnings, just two people and a political crisis. The year was 1970. In April, the government of Prime Minister Eric Williams, in power since 1956, declared a state of emergency after violent demonstrations by the "black power" movement against foreign influences in the economy and high unemployment among Trinidadians of African descent, who from 41 per cent of the population.

In the aftermath of the uprising and the soul-searching among Trinidadians, Gerard Pantin, a Roman Catholic priest and science teacher at one of the island's best schools, resigned and went into the slums that had been the main stage of the demonstrations. One of them, Laventille, was described by the poet Derek Walcott as "huddled there/steel tinkling its blue painted metal air, tempered in violence, like Rio's *favelas*, with snaking, perilous streets... This is the height of poverty for the desperate and black." After the uprising, the area had become associated with armed rebels and subversion.

Pantin and Wesley Hall, the West Indian Fast bowler who went with him, met suspicion, cynicism, distrust and sometimes outright hostility by rival steelbands and gangs. But they continued to "lime", as shooting the breeze on street corners is known locally. "How can we help you?" they would ask. Slowly, the pair won respect. They found jobs for 300 people. They brought life back to a dilapidated community centre by replacing a broken beam (donated by a lumber yard) and finding chairs and benches requested for from the Community Development Division three years earlier. They arranged sewing, cooking and adult education, and play groups for toddlers. Each project required a financial contribution from the community. "Suddenly things began to happen. People waved,

or smiled at us as we went by. We where stopped by people who wanted to talk," Pantin recalls. Servol soon opened an office in Laventille and volunteers came to coach football teams and teach various skills.

Servol quickly defined its principles. Anyone contacting the organization would be taught a "philosophy of ignorance", then "attentive listening" and finally "respectful intervention". This came from Pantin's belief that nearly everyone approached poverty with preconceived ideas and plans, all of them showing a cultural arrogance leading them to think poor people were too stupid to know or solve their own problems if given an opportunity. "We tried in every way possible to fashion Servol's work so that our engagement with people was on their terms, in response to their expressed problems and needs, he said.

### **The National Context**

"The problems confronting Servol in 1994 compared with 1970 are different in degree rather than in kind," says Pantin. "The deterioration in family life has worsened, joblessness and crime has increased, community spirit has been eroded by individualism and selfishness, and drugs have graduated from marijuana to cocaine."

If little of this immediately evident to those who visit Trinidad for its dazzling carnival, the country's poor roads, slums and lack of the country's poor roads, a slums and lack of sewage treatment soon make themselves felt. With a colonial plantation economy rich in oil, Trinidad and Tobago was spurred to rapid industrialization by the 1973 oil crisis. But this also meant real estate speculation, lavish spending on projects that often remained unfinished and a widening gap between rich and poor. The dramatic fall in the world oil prices in 1983 brought serious economic crisis. In 1991, the People's National Movement (PNM) was voted back into power on a platform of education and employment, defeating the incumbent National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR).

Unemployment is now at 24 per cent, with an estimated 47 per cent of the unemployed between 15-19 and 38 per cent between 20-24. Since the United States tightened up on direct trade routes from South America, the Eastern Caribbean has become a transshipment area for

drugs from South to North America. Stories of violent crime by teenagers are in all the newspapers. The official literacy rate, once at 95 per cent, has fallen to 80 per cent, although Pantin says functional illiteracy among youth is as high as 40 per cent. The recent National Task Force on Education was commissioned to scrutinize the system. Was it failing more and more children? Primary education begins at 5 and lasts for seven years, and is attended by 88 per cent of the school-age population. Of those who complete the cycle, 70 per cent get three years of secondary education. To enter secondary school, students must pass a qualifying exam known as the "eleven plus". Ten thousand more students than there are secondary school places take this exam each year. About half will repeat the year, while the rest are put in school-leaving classes or simply drop out. So about 7,000 children between 12 and 17 may not be in school during the critical period of adolescence. It is these who are likely to turn towards Servol's adolescent and skills training programme, mainly in the hope of finding a job.

To deal with these young people, "we have developed our own expertise, our own technology," Pantin told an ADP graduation ceremony several years ago. "It is not a technology based on the flashing lights of computers and the rattle of micro-processors. It is a human technology which can be used to transform children and adolescents who have been battered psychologically and physically and give them a second chance in life."

### **Servol's Hub: The Life Centres**

Life centres are the hub of Servol and put the idea of integrated education into action. At the Beetham Life Centre, built by Servol trainees in 1978, there are courses in carpentry and car mechanics, a health clinic, a nursery and personal development courses for adolescents. The Sunshine Hill centre teachers retarded and autistic children, but also has a pre-vocational unit and Servol's printery. The Forres Park centre has training workshops in ten trades, a dental clinic and a complex of family farms. The Caribbean Life Centre (CLC) trains pre-school instructors for Trinidad and Tobago, and the Caribbean in Servol's teaching methods and philosophy.

The life centre idea emerged gradually. Early on, responding to needs turned Servol into a community organization that reached out to the elderly, the handicapped, teenagers and toddlers. In St Barb's, a district of Laventille, a community centre opened in 1971 with a welding school, a health clinic, and basketball and cricket facilities. Similar projects cropped up in other areas, helped by twelve members of the Defense Force who were seconded indefinitely to Servol. When the National Housing Authority offered land on which to build a large centre, the first Servol life centre at Beetham was conceived.

When the centre opened, 200 boys and girls between 15 and 19 joined. Like most adolescents who pass through Servol, "the vast majority come from one-parent or no-parent families. Many carried knives for protection and marijuana cigarettes to help them in their moments of depression. They were rootless, disadvantaged, brutalized by their life experience," writes Pantin in *The Servol Village*. "They came to the Servol vocational centre because there was no other place to go. We started working with them, training them in various skills and above all, listening to them. They told us everything: of their need for affection and acceptance, their hostility against the adult world, their suspicion of people, their terribly low opinion of themselves." The centre became a place where adolescents formed relationships: with instructors who often became parent substitutes; with babies and younger children because the teenagers have to spend time every day helping in the nursery; and with the sick and elderly, by visiting them. All this grew into the Adolescent Development Programme, a fourteen week course preceding vocational skills training. Through it, adolescents gain spiritual, physical, intellectual, cultural and emotional knowledge, summed up by the acronym SPICES.

### **A Second Chance at 17**

Every adolescent who wants to join Servol is interviewed with a parent or guardian. Few are turned away, although some may have to wait for three to six months for admission. Students are made to feel they are becoming part of a special community. "You can imagine your entry into Servol like getting into a ship. You will learn things like carpentry, nursing, welding, child-care etc. which will help you to get a

job," explains the preface of *A Second Chance at 17* introducing Servol's orientation programme. "These are like the sails of the ship, they help you to move swiftly through the waters of life. This course is like the rudder which steers the ship. No matter how fast a ship goes, if it cannot steer itself properly, it will crash into rock: e.g.: a good carpenter may have a bad temper."

During ADP, teenagers explore their insecurities, complexes and prejudices in a warm, family-like atmosphere. They are taught how to handle anger, boredom and loneliness. They discuss different kinds of love, from love of family and friendship to the meaning and responsibility of sexual love. Many emotional problems that surface are dealt with by group therapy and peer counselling. "We try through this programme to help our young people to understand who they are and to recognize and cope with the many feeling they experience, especially in this whole area of dealing with anger and the cycle of violence," said Sister Ruth Montrichard, then Servol's deputy executive director, at a graduation ceremony. Adolescents journey back in time to study a child's development from the womb to early childhood. They learn how lack of proper food, emotional traumas and alcohol and drug abuse by the mother can cause serious physical and psychological damage to the child. Relationships, values, violence and different kinds of love are further discussed in a spirituality course, in which stores from the Bible are made relevant to adolescent lives. The course incorporates basic elements from the spirituality of Hinduism and Islam, Trinidad's two other main religions.

In another part of ADP, adolescents focus on parenting, since most first pregnancies occur between 17 and 20. Young trainees spend at least three hours a week learning how to wash, feed, dress and play with babies under staff supervision. They learn about the child development from conception to the age of 5. An illustrated book shows helpful and harmful parenting behaviour. Attention is given to the male image in the home and the father's role in bringing up children. "There is a terrible problem with fathers here," explains one Servol trainer. "Few know anything about good parenting and most had a tough childhood where violence and beatings were the only way of communicating and enforcing discipline. I believe we have a better kind of male coming out of ADP,

more sensitive, more open, less aggressive and more knowledgeable about what it means to have kids."

"ADP is like a treatment. They come here scarred and wounded, and they leave with much more discipline and self-awareness," said Lorna Brown, co-ordinator of the EI Socorro Regional Life Centre located about 10 km outside Port of Spain. A typical day in ADP begins at 7:30 a.m., when students punch a time clock. The flag is raised, the national anthem sung and a brief prayer said. Student organize this assembly which instils a sense of discipline and responsibility, essential for graduating to the world of work. "Your really feel the emotion there and the commitment of the staff," said Keith Oberg of the Inter-American Foundation, who recently sat in on the first days of an ADP programme.

After this course, adolescents can join a skills training programme, where they learn a marketable skill and follow literacy classes. All adolescents are tested for literacy and offered appropriate remedial classes from six to twelve hours a week. About a third of Servol's ADP trainees follow the literacy programme which is based on knowledge of the skill they will learn and facts about their country and the world. So, the first words learnt are those used in the corresponding skill. According to one life centre coordinator, "the most difficult problem is to get these kids to admit that they can't read and write enough to get on in society."

Production is the key to the skills programme: 60 per cent of Servol's income comes from its own productive activity. Jobs are done on contract for customers, firms and institutions. The catering department produces, 1,300 meals a day, the carpenters make furniture, including for the pre-school centres. With mason, plumbers and electricians, they build houses and do maintenance jobs. Servol's print shop trains apprentice by producing the organization's in-house material (including a regular newsletter) and winning outside contracts. Nursing student are assigned to nurseries and clinics. There is a different kind of interaction during this part of the course: trade instructors call it "tough love" and take a no-nonsense attitude to prepare trainees for the competitive work world.

The money earned helps pay staff salaries, maintain equipment and give cash incentives to trainees who have worked hard on particular

jobs. Students help draw up orders and cost and stock sheets. Once they are apprenticed to firms for on-the-job training. Employers and students, as well as parents, sign contracts accepting the jobtraining arrangement. All money earned by trainees goes first to Servol. Two-thirds is passes on the trainees, who come to the vocational training centre every two weeks with evaluations from their employers. A job-training officer visits the trainees at work and monitors their performance. Many trainees obtain a full-time job before this period is over. At the end of the programme, they pass national exams leading to a national trade achievement certificate.

Of the 3,000 students who go through ADP and training every year, 10 per cent return to finish secondary school, many through evening classes. Some 75 per cent find work, often through a job placement office situated at the Beetham center. Pantin says job offers have fallen of due to the recession, but Servol graduates are twice as likely to get jobs as trainees from other government or private training programmes. Servol's drop-out rate is 5 per cent, compared with 40 per cent for the Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme, launched by the government in 1988. Evaluations confirm that the Servol graduate is well looked upon by employers. According to one, Servol's programme, besides providing vocational skills, has "furnished its students with attitudes toward work timekeeping, discipline and relationships which make them superior to the average worker in the country without such training."

Students report a great improvement in how they feel about themselves. "The most important thing you learn has to do with attitudes, to control anger," said Sheldon Sookhram, 18, who is training as an automechanic at the Morvant Regional Centre. "When I finish, I want to continue with evening courses in English and maths because I didn't pass those exams in school." Ron Weber, a consultant for the Inter-American Foundation, recalls that "these students, judged failures in the formal system, were as bright as any kids I've ever met . Some of them were writing poetry. They had all kinds of interests and were quite wise about life." Evaluations also praise Servol graduates for their community spirit. Many young people have joined forces to start netball and football teams,

and through community action have raised funds to build plying fields and other facilities. They often inspire adults by getting involved in activities like homes for senior citizens, per-schools or child-care centres. In several areas plagued by drugs, crime, broken homes and a lack of basic facilities, one evaluation reports that "the young people are the ones who have initiated not just a change, but the beginning of a community spirit."

### **Instructors: Trained to Listen**

"We are Servol, and we care," says a charter written by the staff of the Beetham centre in 1981. It takes no special qualification to become a Servol instructor, but a great ability to listen and care. Three times a year, and in-house evaluation with the current group of trainees tries to find out how they feel about their instructors. The young people unanimously say that what distinguishes Servol instructors from most teachers they have come across is that "they really care for us".

Servol's three-month starts with attentive listening: "In Servol, teachers are trained to care by being put into contact with the trainees from day one." says Sister Montrichard. For three weeks, trainees sit in silently on ADP classes, observing how the SPICES curriculum is used. They see how teenagers learn to express feelings, watch their anger and pain surface, but are not allowed to intervene. Each session is followed by a teacher-training discussion. Next, trainees gain deeper understanding of development psychology, and the needs and concerns of adolescents. They develop communication, teaching and counselling skills. As well as learning how to manage a life centre and making ADP a community-based programme; they are immersed in Servol philosophies and how to guide teenagers through the SPICES curriculum. At the end, each instructor takes the floor in a classroom, guided by an experienced teacher. A Servol instructor earns TT\$1,400 (US\$241) a month. Recent budget cuts included a suspended Pension Plan and a sharply reduced Medical Plan. "Working under the pall of these very real concerns, in the demanding sphere of youth and community development, can take its toll on even the most dedicated instructor," said Gerard D'Abreau, assistant ADP coordinator. "A few have had to be audienced/counselled

for what, on the surface, would appear to be less than enthusiastic job performance, but what in reality, was really inept coping with stress."

Trade instructors are hired full time by Servol and follow short training workshops introducing them to the organization's philosophy. These include understanding adolescents, communication, motivation, discipline, and recordkeeping. Several instructors are Servol graduates who have returned to the organization after experience in the workplace. "After five years, I came back to Servol because I recognized the need for training and getting involved with people who are underprivileged, and that I should be an example, or booster, so students can see they can make it to the top," said one instructor. "It all depends on their ability to work." Field officers are chosen among ADP instructors and are selected for their effectiveness as instructors and their ability to assess their colleagues. They are expected to give incisive weekly progress reports and meet every two weeks with centre co-ordinators. Field officers attend sessions one day a month often given by guest lecturers. During the year, staff participate in training seminars on a theme chosen by Servol. Because of concern over rising violence in society, seminars in 1991-1992 dealt with parenting. ADP instructors were challenged to help adolescents develop attitudes and skills so as to become better parents.

### **Fund Aid: Encouraging Entrepreneurs**

Derek Gilbert graduated after eighteen months from Servol's Beetham centre where he specialized in woodwork. With a \$2,000 (U.S.) loan from Fund Aid, he set up his own woodwork shop at his parents' home, with one helper. Today, he has not only repaid his loan on time, but has fine full-time workers and is about to train fifteen unemployed youths.

Fund Aid is Servol's credit arm, set up in 1973 for communities and individuals who do not have enough to borrow from commercial banks. Loans are granted for activities such as tailoring, catering, hairdressing, auto-mechanics and farming. "Our philosophy is based on the promotion of self-help among the less privileged sectors of the community by providing long term and/or low cost loans or by guaranteeing loans to applicants from such sectors of the community,"

explains Fund Aid's chief credit and field officer. "The ideas and projects must originate from the people themselves and our job is to assist them make a reality of these ideas and project." In April 1991, Fund Aid got a US\$500,000 loan and a US\$ 115,000 technical co-operation grant from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) to expand operations.

The average loan is US\$1,100, to be paid back over two years. The arrears rate or late payment is 19.75 per cent, which loan officers aim to reduce to 10 per cent, partly through hiring more field staff this year. Fund Aid has been able to meet only 7 per cent of the demand for loans. So far, there have been 821 direct beneficiaries, affecting the lives of 4,100 people. A recent evaluation showed 59 per cent of beneficiaries were female and from very low income groups. Beneficiaries are trained in small business management, record keeping, financial monitoring and marketing. The IADB technical co-operation grant enabled Fund Aid to expand this side of its operation and install computer facilities.

Applying for a loan involves meetings with field officers who put the potential client's case before a subcommittee of Fund Aid's board of trustees. The applicant must have at least five employed individuals as guarantors, in effect giving the community final approval of the enterprise.

### **First Steps: A Child-centred, Community-based Approach**

At the other end of the educational spectrum are children under 5. About 60 per cent are enrolled in pre-schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Early on in its work in slums, Servol found one way to overcome suspicion and hostility was to start a nursery school. Today, all the country's 153 public pre-schools are run by the Servol/Ministry of Education programme. They are sometimes in churches, under someone's house or in a community centre. They are the fruit of a community's choice. "In December 1986, after the general election, the newly-elected government asked Servol to help set up early childhood centres and centers for training adolescents all over the country" Said Sister Montrichard. "We were happy to say 'yes' but on one condition and that was that each early childhood or adolescent centre would have to be run by the communities in question. Communities would have to ask for these projects and maintain buildings for them, organize themselves into broads

of education to supervise the projects, choose teachers for training, collect school fees and volunteer time to help with the project." This has happened. When several people in a community are interested in starting a pre-school, they approach Servol and then form an eightperson school board. This provides and maintains the facilities, monitors teacher performance, pays the part of their salaries not covered by the small government subsidy and collects fees. Servol provides training to teachers from the fifty preschools that formerly came under the Ministry of Education.

Servo advocates an early childhood education that is parent-oriented, high quality and community-based. This is because Servol's experience suggests that:

- 1) Nearly all a child's personality development takes place before the age of 3, and by the time children reach the age of 5, they are less receptive to change.
- 2) Parents and community members are likely to have a far stronger influence on small children than teachers or other secondary caregivers, making relationships with parents essential to the success of early childcare programmes.
- 3) The world children have to face is tough and competitive. To survive, children must have a well-developed personality and healthy selfesteem.

As in the adolescent programme, the SPICES curriculum requires the teacher to help children develop physically, intellectually, creatively, emotionally and spiritually. Rather than pressure young children into reading, writing and counting at the earliest age, the syllabus aims to help toddlers develop a positive selfimage, to be resourceful and curious about learning, and to be responsible and caring towards the world around them.

Each chapter in the SPICES teacher's guide presents targets such as: "The child is able to share experiences with others", and "The child is able to express ideas/feelings through art creation." Art, drama, music and dance are encouraged through making mobiles or puppets,

exploring sounds and acting out family roles. The curriculum is geared to learning about the Caribbean heritage: children make masks, costumes and pan instruments for carnival and colour flags on Independence day. Reflecting the region's rich ethnic heritage, they celebrate Christian, Hindu and Muslim feasts. Intellectual activities involve concepts of time, space, language, colours and pre-writing skills.

The programme emphasizes self-expression, participation and creativity, and requires teachers to become very involved with a class. According to one evaluation, "the pre-schools themselves are a joy to be in. The pre-school teachers are all trained in classroom management so they are not averse to children moving about and becoming involved in many activities." Several evaluations praise the curriculum, noting that students entering primary schools from Servol tend to be more sociable, speak up in class and generally communicate more than traditional pre-school children do. Traditionally, children mostly learn reading, writing and arithmetic, and are expected to sit at their desks or tables except during break periods. Although some primary school teachers have visited Servol Pre-schools and adopted some of their teaching methods, there is "a danger over the long-term for children to forget what learning is about," said Ron Weber, referring to the transition into the formal system.

Since 1988, Servol's pre-school teacher training programme has been able to issue certificates recognized by Oxford University, which act as Servol's external assessor.

Christine Parker, a member of the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations, has been visiting the early childhood programme for the past five years. "I found the programme extremely impressive. It is striking to see how strong and confident the children are," she said. She has also been trying to make children's books more available and has encouraged teachers to write stories for their pupils.

Recognizing the role of parents as the primary care-giver, each trainee is responsible for setting up a parent-education programme. "Rap sessions are held at which teachers try to persuade parents that excessive discipline and neglect of small children crushes natural creativity and potential. They speak to parents about hygiene, nutrition, environmental

issues and the child's emotional development. In most pre-school, teachers noted improved cleanliness, punctuality and attendance of children over the year, while parents seemed to express more love, praise and encouragement for their offspring. "Teenage parents, both fathers and mothers, are showing significant changes in their role as parents," says one report. "They are more responsible and they both take an active part in caring and looking after their children." In some areas, the district health nurse was invited to speak to a parenting class. It was not in vain: in all but one of the 105 nursery schools surveyed in 1992, junk food, candy and soft drinks had disappeared from children's lunch boxes and been replaced by fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods. Parents often help with school outings, sports days, field trips and concerts. They supervise the pre-schools and even stand in when teachers have Servol workshops and seminars. In several cases, teachers reported that adults who never spoke to each other were friends through their involvement in pre-schools.

This parenting programme again highlights the links between early childhood and adolescence: teenage parents are the most willing to attend parent education courses and those who get most out of them. According to a 1990 evaluation, they seem more open than older parents to new ideas and ways of rearing children advocated by trainee teachers.

Community involvement in schools often takes the form of clean-up around the school, spraying from mosquitoes, and helping in building, repairing or maintaining the pre-school building, as well as fund-raising and supporting school celebrations through prize-giving, food donations and attendance.

### **Teachers: A Three-year Training Course**

Since 1983, Servol has run a three-year pre-school teacher-training course, with one year's full-time study at the Servol Caribbean Teacher Training Centre in Port of Spain and two years internship. This centre helps the Eastern Caribbean region develop training programmes in early childhood and adolescent development. Servol trains about sixty pre-school teachers a year from other Caribbean countries and so far some 300 have graduated from the course. In 1992, a three-day symposium

gathered co-ordinators of early childhood education programmes in the Caribbean to exchange ideas, participate in workshops and discuss achievements.

Each community chooses who it wants trained as pre-school teachers and usually picks young women between 20 and 30, active in the church, mosque or temple, with at least three years' secondary education. "More important than a piece of paper showing which exams you have taken is how you are as a person," explains Pantin. Candidates chosen for the Servol teacher-training school will be supported by the district board of education, which pays for the year-long course.

Personal development and self-awareness are stressed during the course. An orientation period was added to the first month when an evaluation by the early childhood programme teachers pointed out that many trainees had negative self-image and felt homesick. The programme now starts by helping them develop a sense of community and come to terms with themselves. "The students come from such a formal education system that they find it hard to adapt," said Parker.

The programme includes learning how to work with parents and the community. "This is the excellent part of it," said Parker. Trainees have to report on what they have done in this respect. Some trainees for instance, arranged dental check-ups for children. During the two-year internship, trainees attend monthly workshops which deal with classroom management, how to improve curriculum materials and community awareness. Parents can also attend and have said how they appreciated the chance to interact with teachers and the parents of other students.

Salaries are small - TT\$ (US-\$87) a month, about a quarter of what government teachers earn - yet the teachers' dedication is striking. "Working for Servol is almost like being a volunteer," Said one teacher, "but I get such satisfaction from this job that I want to hang on to it."

Field officers are the key to the programme's success. "I was very impressed by their knowledge," said Parker. Field officers visit interns in the field, encouraging them and monitoring their performance. They also go to training sessions with them every other week and organize

workshops attended by all the teachers in a zone. Subjects vary according to needs. All field officers have been pre-school teachers. They make monthly reports to the Caribbean life centre and can often play a crucial role in dealing with community boards of education. Problems include internal dissension, inability to provide a site for a pre-school or failure to raise funds to top up the low teacher salaries.

For teachers from government pre-schools, Servol provides an in-service training with twice-weekly workshops and six-week vacation workshops, followed by regular supervision. At the outset of the Servol/Ministry of Education relationship, the obligation to do this provoked some reticence from teachers, according to a member of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, one of Servol's earliest funders. Government school teachers are generally chosen by the ministry of education on the basis of their academic achievements, and training for pre-school and secondary school teachers is not compulsory.

### **Government Collaboration: Finding a Modus Vivendi**

In February 1992, the Trinidadian press ran articles on the effects of the government's 40 per cent cut in Servol's subsidy. Since the TT\$1.7 million (US\$293,000) subsidy helped pay teachers salaries, the cut meant thirty-three pre-schools would be shut down within a month. A doctor warned that "it is going to cost this country far more than the 40 per cent the government is withholding from Servol to support those young people who will now be left without hope." Diana Mahabir, an independent senator, called the cut a "tragedy", reminding readers that children at Servol schools were getting some of the best pre-school education in the country at next to no cost. Similarly, the cut in ADP was likely to "seal the fate of hundreds of young people who have nowhere else to go". The protests reflected the enormous credibility Servol had gained.

The government subsidy was finally restored by 20 per cent. At present, it stands at TT\$2.1 million (US\$350,000), which pays for 153 early childhood care and education centres. Pantin says the programme survives only because Servol has continued to train teachers at no cost to the government. He put the real cost of the programme at TT\$2.5 million.

How successful has Servol's relationship with the government been? "The government's attitude is ambivalent," said Diana Mahabir, but Servol has "handled the partnership problem with quite a lot of sophistication". The relationship is helped by a shift in the government's approach to the grassroots: on the recommendation of a top-level task force on social and economic development, it recently adopted a community-based development model in which the expertise of non-governmental organizations (NGO) in "safety-net" programmes is recognized. Mahabir stresses that although NGOs have always played a vital role in providing social services in Trinidad, it now seems "the government is ready to support this rather than fight it, which may be due to Servol and the fact they have been so successful".

Huub Schreurs of the Bernard van Leer foundation, feels a balance has yet to be struck between the two parties. "Bureaucrats tend to take over and forget about content and the ability you need in the field", he says. Servol's challenge in the years to come is to reinforce community capacity and "be able to keep firm grip on it".

Since the Ministry of Education/Servol ADP programme began five years ago, it has grown from four life centres to forty-three, and from 12 employees to 130. Teacher training has been perfected, but the government has not taken responsibility for the in-service training model, Schreurs says. The combination of a flexible NGO style and a more rigid, bureaucratic one makes a fragile alliance, but that it exists at all is thanks to Pantin's top education ministry connections under the previous NAR government. Servol survived a return to the PNM, however. "They have made the transition to the opposition party because of a good political sense and the national attraction of the programme," says Keith Oberg of the Inter-American Foundation. Pantin explains: "When Servol was approached by the government to spread its programmes, we insisted that while we were prepared to access funding from overseas foundations, the government had to commit itself to counterpart funding and gradually increase its contribution as external financing was phased out." Today, Pantin feels the "only frustration we have is from middle-level civil servants, not too happy with the major role given to an NGO". But, he says, "this has practically disappeared and we no longer have to lobby for a reasonable budget".

### Funding: The Road Toward Self-sufficiency

Servol runs programmes employing 400 people with an annual budget of some TT\$9 million. Half of this sum comes from the Ministry of Education for the salaries of those employed in the early childhood and adolescent programmes; one quarter comes from overseas foundations and the rest is provided by the productive work of the life centres (construction, training, maintenance and printing), pledges from local business, donations and the annual Christmas dinner. The accounts of Servol Ltd. and those of the minister of education/Servol programmes are separate.

As well as donations under deed of covenant, the private sector has put up TT\$3.5 million (US\$603,448) and has also started an endowment fund to provide financial help after the withdrawal of funding by the van Leer Foundation at the end of 1993. Companies supporting Servol include the National Petroleum Co., the Natural Gas Co., Neal and Massy, leading insurance companies, the three biggest banks, Angostura Ltd and number of other companies.

The Van Leer Foundation, the Inter-American foundation, MISEREOR and HELVETAS have been Servol's most loyal donors. While the Van Leer Foundation has worked closely with Servol in developing the early childhood care programme, the Inter-American Foundation has given Servol grants to the regional programme and to run Fund Aid. It has made a US\$264,370 five-year grant to train instructors in ECEP and ADP. A smaller three-year grant is for the Parent Outreach Programme in which field officers go into homes, help group of parents set up small income-generating projects and show them how to stimulate their children's development. MISEREOR and HELVETAS have given support to the adolescent programme.

Servol has stayed locally-based: "People are more prepared to contribute financially to their own area and to the welfare of their own children than to a centrally-managed project," says Pantin in a Servol newsletter. "Proper systems must however be put in place to ensure accountability." The executive director or chairman of the board attends the fortnightly meeting of coordinators and field officers. "The

information we receive is a crucial link to the community," said Pantin. "One of us also visits every centre at least once a year to link up with the community and we invite boards to come to our general headquarters to discuss the progress of the centres."

Pantin insists that going to scale has not compromised Servol's independent NGO status. "If all government funding were withdrawn", he says, "the 153 pre-schools and about 30 of the 40 life centres would have to go private or close down. Servol would continue training teachers and instructors from all over the Caribbean and would administer about ten life centres (the large regional ones offering vocational skills training) which could support themselves. In 1994, Servol's budget from the Ministry of Education was US\$350,000 for 4,800 pre-school children; and US\$614,000 for 3,000 adolescents. The grants received by Servol, which have now ended were for renovating buildings, for buying furniture and vocational equipment, and for other capital items.

Despite staff dedication, low salaries contribute to high teacher turnover. One field coordinator, asked if he planned to stay with Servol, said: "I'm not sure. The salaries are too low, it's hard on my family." He earns TT\$1,600 (US\$275) a month, compared with TT\$4,800 (US\$827) earned by a supervisor in the formal system. Often however, poor wages seem "offset by the obvious pride and satisfaction of being part of something that works," said Oberg. Lorna Brown, co-ordinator of the El Socorro life centre, was a teacher in the formal system before joining Servol. "I came here because I was frustrated with my job," she said "I wanted to do so much but there was nothing I could change. When you see the results of the Kids in formal school, it's sad, they're like machines or like computers." Good promotion chances are also a Servol attraction. More than 80 per cent to the senior positions have been filled from within Servol.

### **Power-sharing in the Communities**

The sharing of power at community level does not always happen smoothly: the delicate balance of power and continual education of the boards absorbs project co-ordinators and field officers. Sometimes boards are too complacent and leave instructors with the bulk of responsibility.

"Getting together with a truly representative community board of education was not without a few anxious moments," explained two instructors from the Morvant-Laventille life centre. "These relations evolved amid skepticism, mainly due to intra-community and political overtones with two board officials involved in the last government election campaign. The relationship between the board of education and the community, while not as co-operative and dynamic as one would wish, is still one of healthy respect and understanding."

New boards of education have common problems but are gaining strength and are fighting for their communities. "Boards were quick to gather up all resources to support the national management efforts to get the government to reverse its 40 per cent budget cut," said Gerard D'Abreau, ADP's national co-ordinator. "This support once again showed how boards, parents and communities really felt about the centres. The centres were now truly their life centres and must stay." He added: "Boards have continued to render a sensitive and supportive presence in the lives of their centres and are more and more drawing their communities (business, professional and otherwise) into the life centre experience."

### **Replicability: Starting on Home Ground**

If there is anything replicable in the Servol experience, it is the approach and the methodology. Listening, consulting with the community, having patience to wait and proceed at the pace of the people, these are the skills necessary for community workers wherever in the world they work," writes Pantin in *The Servol Village*.

Servol's expertise in early childcare and adolescence led to an arrangement with government to go to scale. Servol methods are spreading to other Eastern Caribbean islands. In 1993, Servol seemed to have reached a new peak prompting Pantin to call it an *annus mirabilis*. The section of the National Task Force on Early Childhood Care and Education recommended a focus "on the family, the child and ultimately the community". At the secondary level, the report called for less impersonal schools and a curriculum that includes technology studies and is closer to the needs of learners "experiencing psychological conflicts".

The same year, after teenage crimes in a Port of Spain school, Servol and the guidance unit of the ministry of education drafted a plan to deal with violence in schools. "It was a historic event, signaling the official entry of Servol into the formal education system," says Pantin. Two Servol instructors were appointed to help students develop self-awareness, with emphasis on spirituality and parenting. Students soon opened up to Servol instructors, while teachers, at first wary of the newcomers, began to sit in on some sessions. "The instructors confirmed that there was absolutely nothing wrong with the pupils, who were in no way different from the 3,000 adolescents with whom Servol deals each year," says the report on the experiment. The problem lay in a cultural gap between street-smart pupils from the grassroots and university-trained, middle-class teachers. "Nothing in their training had equipped them to understand, much less deal with problems of these youngsters. In addition, very few of them came from the area, and were not particularly interested in the school as part of the community. The result was that an atmosphere of fear enveloped the entire educational plan."

ADP has also been introduced to a juvenile detention centre, adapted to an orphanage, and used to help recovering drug addicts. The SPICES curriculum was the basis of the adapted programmes. Servol works closely with government in drug prevention and has helped the government train teachers for its youth training and employment programme. Although the guidance unit of the Ministry of Education strongly advocates incorporation of ADP into secondary schools, Senator Mahabir feels Servol will have no effect on altering the formal education system, and specifically in the weeding out imposed by the "eleven-plus" exam.

### **Conclusion: A More Responsive Society**

Reflecting his background as a science teacher, Gerry Pantin once described Servol as a mole cricket: "It is a graceless, awkward-looking insect when it emerges from its subterranean habitat, and is generally regarded as a pest. It spends most of its time below the soil, nibbling at the roots of Savannah grass, never destroying it and never interfering with it drastically-but making its distinctive presence felt nevertheless."

The metaphor of something alive and inquisitive is appropriate. But Pantin's observations during his first weeks in Laventille are worth recalling: struck by the lack of a stable family life, he said "the child grows up without the ability to love. The consequence is a vicious circle from which few children emerge able to take their place in the world as balanced, responsible adults." Servol works on all fronts to rebuild families and give the disadvantaged self-esteem and hope for the future. It does so through its own blend of "tough love" that combines listening with caring, creating role models and building up community partnerships. "Servol sees itself as a kind of village and it certainly functions that way," said Ron Weber of the Inter-American Foundation, pointing out that it brings together people from communities all over Trinidad. In a region where patronage is deeply entrenched, Weber praises Servo's method of instilling a symbolic and material dimension to community development: "if beneficiaries do not contribute something real, it is unlikely they will take credit for what happens. Development is not just a question of economic and material progress but also of the satisfaction of being empowered and in control in one's own community."

Giving rough adolescents the responsibility of caring for a toddler is likely to have a lasting influence on them. Instilling a love of learning at an early age and emphasizing the role of parents gives disadvantaged children a better chance of starting off right. A course challenging teenagers to understand their emotions and build relationships can start to heal their sense of failure and low self-esteem.

Servol has well-defined philosophy and two main target groups that have guided its policies and staff over the last two decades. Some 20,000 adolescents have gone through ADP, a large number on a island of 1.2 million people. The early childhood care and education centres have started to shape the attitudes of very many young children. In going to scale, it has kept in touch with these groups by a decentralized system while maintaining high standards. The organization's skill in dealing with young children and adolescents has been recognized by the government, which asked it to extend its programmes and, more recently, to head to National Task Force's subcommittee on early childhood education. Pre-school teachers are assessed by an outside examiner from Oxford University and teenagers must pass a national exam to get a

certificate in their trade. Both of these enhance Servol's status and credibility.

More than 100 communities have taken responsibility for the education of 2 to 5 year olds. Trinidad is going through a difficult economic period, partly because of structural adjustment programmes and falling oil revenues, putting more pressure on communities to organise and programmes and falling oil revenues, putting more pressure on communities to organise and promote self-help. Not all communities can afford to build pre-schools and the most disadvantaged are not always being reached, so Servol recently developed the Parent Outreach Programme. In an attempt to keep the vocational skills programme abreast of change, the organization asked the Inter-American Development Bank for funds for computer literacy and electronic training programmes for 1,700 adolescents a year.

Servol's experience also shows that grassroots people can be trained as fine instructors in a human development programme and that competent childhood educators can often be people with few academic credentials. Servol has developed expertise mainly by listening to needs and helping people gain power over their lives.

Then there is the inspiring figure of Servol's founder, Gerard Pantin. "Gerry Pantin is a man with a vision and great charisma. He has the ability to infect people with this vision," according to Ruth Cohen of the van Leer Foundation. "It is amazing to see how inspired the staff are. Teachers feel very inspired to do something for children, their parents, their community and country."

In the end, vision is perhaps the best word a few months after Gerard Pantin retired and was replaced by Sister Montrichard, who has been with the organization since 1975. Servol continues to travel towards a vision: of greater self-knowledge and reliance on the part of instructors, parents, teenagers and children, of a holistic education that challenges students in heart and mind. It strives for a more humane, responsive system, in which education starts at birth, ripens in the home, and is supported by the community. As an African saying cherished by Servol goes, "It takes a village to bring up a child."

# 3

## PROMOTING PRIMARY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROJECT

### Introduction

Savita, Mangal, Sunita, and Kamala are girls between the ages of nine and fourteen from the Indian state of Maharashtra. During the day, they contribute to their family's income by grazing cattle and helping in the house, just like some 15 million Indian children under 14 who have never attended school or were forced to drop out at an early age.

But a new window on living and learning has opened since they started attending night classes in their village as part of a project designed by the Indian Institute of Education. Sitting in a circle, the girls talk about the day's happenings and join in reading, writing and telling stories, singing song and playing games.

Indian leaders have called for universal primary education in India since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. While the Imperial Government asked a commission to recommend an educational system suited to colonial rule, educated Indians set up primary schools on a voluntary basis, especially for girls, in the towns. The first one that admitted girls as well as women was opened in Pune City in 1848, enabling several widows and destitute women to complete primary education and become teachers.

Pune, in Maharashtra state, has kept up this tradition of social reform. Today, it is home to the Indian Institute of Education, which in 1979 launched the country's first comprehensive action-research project

in part-time, non-formal primary education. In its first and second phases (1979-1985 and 1985-1988), it worked respectively with 110 and 35 villages. Now in its third phase, PROPEL (Promoting Primary and Elementary Education Project) is training the inhabitants of 137 villages to take responsibility for the quality of education in the non-formal stream.

The rural community is PROPEL's backbone: from analysing a village's educational profile and deciding to start a non-formal education course, to choosing instructors and solving problems in running the project, the community-including local leaders, women and primary school teachers-is at the heart of the IIE model. Flexible timetables, curricula tailored to the local environment, instructors familiar with the community and easy access to classes are highlights of a project which has been particularly effective in reaching girls, the largest group excluded from schooling by household tasks and deep-rooted social customs. By running two-hour classes for some 300 evenings a year, the programme hopes to raise all children to the level of formal school grade 3 or 4 within two years.

Supported by the state and central governments, the project applies "micro-planning", a key element of the 1992 National Policy on Education (NPE) in which the district, not the state, is the unit of decentralized planning. It is also in line with the government's view that alternative channels of primary education are essential if Education for All is to be achieved.

Through its "action-research" approach to development, the IIE has fine-tuned the PROPEL programme in several phases over the past 15 years to make it into a holistic model of rural development embracing early childhood care, women's groups, adult literacy, post-literacy learning and training villagers to manage local education. The PROPEL story provides valuable clues as to how a comprehensive community-based and decentralized model of primary education can succeed. PROPEL has also started to influence the formal system: besides giving teachers a chance to help shape the non-formal education(NFE) programme, it has recently started to share its pedagogical approach with formal schools as teachers have enquired about IIE-produced materials.

## India's Educational Challenge

While India's elementary education system has expanded into one of the largest in the world, the country is also home to the world's highest number of out-of-school children (22 per cent of the 160 million children in the 6-14 age group) and adult illiterates (30 per cent of the total population). If Education for All is to be achieved in India, then about 19 to 24 million in the 6-14 age group, of whom 60 per cent are girls, must be reached by the end of the decade.

A commitment to education is enshrined in India's 1950 Constitution which says "the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." Basic education was one of the goals of India's freedom movement. "We felt at that time that total freedom would never be ours if we were not educated and if we did not do our best to educate," said Dr Chitra Naik in recent interview with "The Times of India." Aware that the British system was unsuitable for most rural Indians, Mahatma Gandhi devised a work-centred primary education scheme to increase rural productivity and involve the rural community in educating its children. Educational administrators and political leaders opposed it saying it would differentiate between urban and rural learners, and deprive rural children of the opportunity to obtain government jobs.

At independence in 1947, only 14 per cent of the population was literate and one child out of three was enrolled in primary school. Over the past four decades, rural poverty, caste and gender discrimination, along with the nature of the rural economy, have stood in the way of universal primary education, especially among children from disadvantaged groups. Recognizing that the conventional education system could not attract these groups and required comprehensive reorganization, the government appointed the Indian Education Commission in 1964 to study the issue. Its members underlined the importance of flexibility and relevance in the educational system, and of community participation for spreading and organizing primary education in particular.

Acting on these finding and with supporting advice from the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Education introduced a part-time, non-formal primary education scheme by giving special help to states with the most out-of-school children. This new measure "did not quite succeed in evolving a credible system which could attract the out-of-school children because hardly any special preparation was made for launching, conducting, monitoring and evaluating this crucial innovation," writes Dr Naik, honorary director of the PROPEL project. "Non-formal primary education for socio-economically deprived working children called for non-traditional approaches to its organisation and pedagogy."

In 1985, the country's educational system was reviewed, leading to the National Policy on Education (NPE/1986), updated in 1992. It shifted the emphasis from simple enrolment to enrolment as well as retention, quality and achievement, since as the action programme pointed out, "enrolment by itself is of little importance if children do not continue beyond one year, many of them not seeing the school for more than a few days."

The NPE emphasized local planning, mobilizing community support, a child-centred and activity-based learning provides, the consideration of gender in all planning and closer links with NGOs and basic community services such as primary health care. The NPE also called for a large and systematic programme of non-formal education to achieve universal elementary education. It stressed that this alternative channel should adopt the standards of the formal system but be flexible enough for learners to progress at their own pace.

Since 1986, the number of NFE centres in the country has risen from 126,000 to 238,000, with those for girls up from 20,500 to 79,000. In the same period, enrolment in these centres rose from 4 to 6 million. Over 400 voluntary agencies are participating in the NFE programme.

### **The PROPEL Model: An Action-research Approach**

All IIE research and programmes are based on the idea that education and development are closely related, and that people at local

level are the makers of development, while government agencies are facilitators. From this standpoint, the PROPEL project assumes that Education for All can best be organised through community mobilization.

By 1986, the Indian Institute of Education had developed a workable model of non-formal education, known as the "IIE Model" by the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development. The project takes account of the economic, social and cultural plight of poor children and aims to mobilize rural communities for educational development. This begins with a meticulous survey of local educational needs, conducted as a participatory exercise.

PROPEL has evolved in three phases throughout which the "action-research" approach has been applied, giving it the profile of an experiment that has to be carefully prepared, implemented, observed and monitored in order to be improved along the way. Theoretical knowledge of education and rural society is combined with the practical experience of participants, through systematic steps to problem-investigation. "Because PROPEL is a research project, we have to look for the reasons for both its failures and its successes," says a PROPEL staff member.

During Phase I of the project, from 1979-85, nearly 4,500 children from 110 villages in five types of agro-climatic areas were reached under a non-formal education programme involving local leadership and communities. A 1985 evaluation by the University of Bombay praised the project for its relevant curriculum, attractive and flexible teaching-learning materials, good training for locally-selected 'non-professional' teachers and community-based management and supervision. It showed a higher benefit at lower costs than those incurred in full-time formal schools.

Phase II (1985-1988) covered 669 children in NFE centres of 35 newly-selected villages in very poor drought-prone and difficult hilly tracts. The emphasis in this phase was on testing measures for community involvement by strengthening Village Education Committees as local motivators and manager of primary education. PROPEL is now in its third phase, putting the accent on comprehensive community education, both formal and non-formal, involving large-scale collaboration for social

change. The project is expected to produce a replicable planning and development model so that training programme in community-level planning for education can be set up for voluntary agencies and government officials. So far, this phase has brought more than 5,500 out-of-school children into the primary education stream through 178 NFE centres, learning camps and voluntary visitor-instructors for the unreached small groups of school-age children through formal and non-formal arrangements systematically planned and monitored by Village Education Committees. In 1994, these village will work towards the universalization of upper primary education.

### **Starting off: What are the Local Needs?**

The community-village leaders, teachers from the fromal school and parents- is at the centre of the project. Unless the community stands behind an NFE programme and encourages children to learn, the project cannot take off. "The initiative for starting the programme has to come from the villagers. They themselves have to survey how may people need the programme," Says an education coordinator. "A place for the centre has to be offered and the villagers themselves have to solve the problems." The first step in the project is to convene a village meeting to tell communities about the NFE programme and its reliance on local participation.

Field staff from the IIE train the semi-educated youth to prepare maps, infromation sheets and conduct house-to house surveys. In this ways, every household gets to know about the programme, while the project staff finds out about the economic and educational situation of every villager. By involving the community in identifying educational needs, the chances of holding classes and ways to reach the marginalized, a movement for education is started. "I think it's very essential to go to the people and to work with people," says Dr. Naik. "For cooperation, we think it's very essential to establish a rapport with all the functionaries working in the villages, be they governmental, non-governmental or local."

One the surveys have been analyzed, the community decides if it needs and wants to start non-fromal primary education classes or other

community-development programmes. If so, it must find a place for an NFE centre and arrange for lighting if classes are held at night. A special committee, known as the Village Education Committee (VEC), is appointed to help project staff organise and supervise classes and to rally the rural community to the educational cause. This committee draws up lists of possible volunteer-teachers and helps choose them.

The VECs are the chief means of participation in the PROPEL project. Although the concept of VECs has been around for many years, it was the 1992 Programme of Actions coupled with legislation making it mandatory for all states to set up democratically elected bodies for local self-government, which gave VECs legal sanction and political and administrative support. The VECs are established by consensus at a meeting of the village council and are important in convincing parents to enrol their children in a non-formal centre, in planning and supervising classes, and trying to solve problems.

### **The Centres: A Place Called Apla Vargh**

Every evening, Sunanda, a 19-year-old woman from Chivhewadi, a village of 800 inhabitants, transforms the courtyard of her uncle's home into a classroom, putting charts up on the mud wall and displaying small clay objects made by the children on the ground. During the monsoon season or on cold evenings, the class moves indoors.

Because Chivhewadi is in hilly country, Sunanda often picks up students and accompanies them to class. Most are girls who do farm and household work during the day. According to a local primary school teacher, "all the village children are enrolled in the primary school. What happens is that during the third standard, the girls have become old enough to work and then they drop out." Their brothers usually go on attending the formal school.

Since most dropouts from the formal school are girls, the centres have to be as close to their homes as possible. Parents are unwilling to send their daughters any distance at such late hours. Centres can be set up in school rooms, private houses, temples, village council offices, cow sheds and other places. In several tribal hamlets, the community built special sheds with bamboo matting, mud bricks and other local materials.

Whatever the NFE centre is, the village sees it as something it owns. Enrolment is not easy at first: prospective learners who have already passed normal school-entrance age and may have had disappointing experiences before dropping out of formal school are not likely to be too enthusiastic about starting to learn again. So PROPEL works with the VEC to create a community atmosphere to encourage universal primary education.

NFE centres are inaugurated ceremonially by an important person or official and can be visited any time by the community. On inauguration day, the chosen instructor is presented with a set of equipment for the class. Prospective students receive a name-badge and the instructor makes a brief speech assuring villagers that he/she is committed to helping the children learn successfully and will treat them carefully as younger brothers and sisters. The guest of honour presents slates and textbooks to the students, explaining that they belong to the NFE centre.

The project is community-oriented with an informal atmosphere, but this does not mean it lacks structure. A sense of responsibility and belonging is fostered among students. A cardboard sign reading Apla Vargh ("Our Class") and the name of the village is hung by the teacher wherever the class is held. No school bell is rung, but the children are expected to collect one another and come to class on time. In places where girls are afraid to venture out in the evening, they are collected and walked home by the teacher or another villager.

Since materials and books belong to the class, students know they must be handled carefully. Weekly schedules, dates of holidays and special activities are decided between the students and their teacher. In western Maharashtra, for example, vacations are usually determined by the rainy season or the harvesting period.

Taking part in these decisions raises children's self-esteem and capacity to enjoy learning. The "class-room" becomes a congenial place where children get greater encouragement than in the more disciplined and rigid formal school. Students call their teachers "Tai" and "Bhau", meaning elder sister or brother, and sit in a circle for classes. This interaction of students and teacher helps create a relaxed atmosphere, ideal for dramatics, story-telling, singing, discussions and performing science experiments.

## The Classes: Making Learning a Joy

Understanding the lives of the children attending NFE classes has been the basis for developing suitable curriculum and learning and teaching strategies. In a non-formal learning atmosphere where attendance is voluntary, children must look forward to coming to class, especially after a day's work.

All come from poor backgrounds, most are past the age of entry into the formal system and their parents are usually illiterate. A growing number come from single-parent homes and most are girls who need help to overcome inferiority feelings "deeply injected into their psyche by convention-bound parents and society," says Dr. Naik. "It was necessary to create opportunities for them to express themselves freely in speech, drawing, singing and dramatization. The class-climate which gave them respect and freedom, yogasanas, songs, stories and various opportunities for self-expression were the main techniques which enabled the pupils to tackle academic learning and make progress in overall self-development."

In an average NFE class, there are about 20 students between the age of 9 and 14. Before starting class, children freshen up with a bucket of water provided by the project. A typical class begins with a "prayer-song", followed by simple yogasanas for relaxation or more singing with tapping on sticks to keep rhythm. Students report on the day's happenings by asking each other questions, then settle down to their activities. The class is usually divided into several groups: in one, students might start to write multiplication tables on the slates. In another, they copy some sentences from their primer onto their slates and eventually read small stories. In a third one, the instructor may help students learn new syllables and make words out of them on the flannel-graph.

These small groups where students take turns being tutors and tutees, foster a cooperative learning environment and favour self-discipline. "This peer-group learning is the best way to teach an ungraded class in which some students are advanced, some are average and others below average," says an education coordinator. At the end of the class, students gather in a circle again to listen to a story read by the teacher,

after which they are expected to answer questions. The class usually ends with games and singing.

Dividing the class into groups and emphasizing "mastery learning", which encourages students to compete with themselves rather than others, are key aspects of PROPEL's teaching strategy. "A tradition is developed that is taken into the home," said one instructor. "Students learn how to help each other and ask for help. We also teach them to manage education: how to study, how to read, so they can continue their education at home." The goal is to help them be independent learners by the end of the two-year course, skilled enough to help the family manage accounts, write letters and applications when necessary, read newspapers, stories, circulars etc. "I can read and write now," says Indubai, a 14-year-old girl who did the NFE course. "I can speak confidently with a new person, keep account of my daily wages and, if time allows, I teach my brother. I also learnt how to keep myself clean and live neatly."

### **A Curriculum to Suit Local Needs**

According to Dr Naik, centralized production of school materials is one of the biggest problems plaguing the Indian education system. It is why the IIE, in its small way, has concentrated on developing a locally-relevant curriculum in the most common language of the region, Marathi. Designing it began with systematic analysis of the formal school's primary curriculum to ensure the part-time classes covered the basic units of learning. A non-formal curriculum tends to stress preparing children for their youth and adulthood in the community, and is not necessarily geared towards entering secondary school.

The children's lives and environment are treated as learning resources enabling them to master language, mathematics, social studies, and personal and social development concepts. Oral instruction is emphasised at the beginning of the course and reduced as students learn to read and grasp new materials.

"We give knowledge which is essential for life," says one education coordinator, who thinks that school textbooks restrict the child's learning to the three 'Rs' and routine preparation for secondary school. In

PROPEL's programme, students interview parents and older relatives to find out the history of their own families. The class explores landmarks, institutions, occupations and traditions in their village. Each class prepares a booklet showing local crops, flora, fauna, communications, rivers and streams. Seasonal festivals are celebrated and studied in the light of their geographical meaning and importance. Students do not officially have homework but are encouraged to develop greater awareness of their environment: during the day, working in the fields, they often collect stones, feathers, seeds, berries, leaves, bark of insects and describe their findings in class. These descriptions can lead to exercises in language and numeracy, history, geography and science.

Parents are the first to see their children's new awareness and self-confidence. "I am very grateful to the people who provided the NFE centre," said the mother of 12-year-old Mangal. "She was very shy and introverted before. Since she has been at the NFE centre, she has become talkative." Another mother reported that her daughter Kavita has pleaded not to be married before 18, echoing issues raised by the NFE instructor and discussed in class. Kavita's mother also recounted an incident which shows how children put their learning to use: "When I was ill and had fever, Kavita insisted that I should drink boiled water. We don't usually do that, because it has a different taste."

### **Class Materials: A True Rural Orientation**

The primers and readers were compiled by the project team after discussions with community leaders to ensure they had a genuine rural orientation in content and language. Linguists, educators, sociologists and psychologists were consulted for the language lessons. The language and vocabulary of science and mathematics material were also checked with community members to ensure their links with oral traditions. This process calls for flexibility and the openness to recognize shortcomings: one of the programme's first textbooks posed "problems with the dialects and was not region-specific, so children in the hills could not understand many of the ideas," explains a PROPEL staff member. Today, PROPEL's NFE curriculum covers the following subjects:

**Language:** The two language primers, which aim to stimulate dialogue, cover the whole alphabet and stress listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**Mathematics:** Students cut geometrical shapes out of paper, draw pictures, do oral accounts learn measures of length, breadth, area, capacity and weight by actual practice.

**Social Studies:** The history of the village and the arrival of technology (bicycles, pumps, electric lights, radio, etc.) is traced. The idea that 'history is society's past' is understood and grasped by interviewing old people. A time-line of important events is drawn by students and teachers. In geography, the local environment is studied and everyone helps to draw a village map. Environmental factors are monitored and entered in a notebook called "Our Village." Each centre/class prepares a statement on the development needs of the village.

**Health:** Yoga exercises, discussions around health and hygiene charts, use of folders on water, nutrition, food, first aid and common ailments, all promote awareness of health. Medication for minor bruises, scabies and lice is given when needed.

**Science:** Students observe natural phenomena, learn to do experiments and relate this knowledge to daily experiences. A special science kit for experiments is given to each centre, with a guide for use.

**Creativity and Aesthetic Sensitivity** are promoted through art work, decoration with leaved and flowers, singing, playing, dance and drama.

The project also supplies each centre with a small blackboard, a flannel-graph, cut-out shapes of numbers and letters, a mirror and combs, a teacher's register, notebook and remarks-book, paper, crayons, scissors and a first-aid kit.

### **Teachers: From the Village**

While the old British colonial policy of not appointing local people as teachers for fear of sedition and rebellion still persists in the formal

school system, PROPEL favours hiring of local teachers, especially women. The Village Education committees are responsible for choosing them.

Training rural teachers for non-formal, part-time classes has no precedent in India. Most PROPEL teachers are women with very little education. Training is done within walking distance of the instructor's village and emphasizes personality development: "The programme is totally participatory," says a PROPEL staff member. "We focus on awareness, skills-training session takes 10 days. Each evening, trainees watch a non-formal centre in action. The institute believes such training is a very good way of keeping instructors interested throughout the course. The, training sessions of three to four days are held about once every six weeks. Informality is the rule: "We all sit in a circle on the floor, like in class, so we are on an equal level with the teachers," says a staff member. Once a year, the Indian Institute of Education organises a meeting of all PROPEL's instructors for an exchange of experience among them.

Regularly boosting a teacher's motivation is one way to fight a relatively high turnover among instructors. NFE instructors only work a few hours a day and get an honorarium of about 105 rupees, about one-twenty fifth of a primary school teacher's pay. Migration to cities is a common reason why instructors quit their jobs. Female instructors sometimes resign after marrying or having children, but the project staff have found that married women who are permanently settled in the village are the most reliable teachers. PROPEL also tries to minimize the impact of teacher drop-out by recruiting and training several additional instructors from the same village.

Sometimes PROPEL has been a stepping stone for instructors to move on the better-paid jobs. some women view it as a chance to take part in local development: "I get a lot of joy from teaching though I can earn more money in other ways, like sewing," said one. "But I feel that by teaching children, I increase my own knowledge. I get to grow with these girls."

Teachers receive support and guidance from Education coordinators, who also must come from the area where they work.

Education coordinators are chosen by the IIE, in consultation with local officials and well educated non-officials. They are usually unemployed graduates and matriculates who understand rural education and development problems. To date, all are men, due to the very limited number of female degree-holders in rural areas. Responsible for centres in six to eight villages, their main job is to help instructors apply NFE teaching methods and feel accountable to the community rather than to a distant employer like the district administration. They organise recurrent training for instructors, keep daily diaries and prepare monthly reports to discuss with the project team. "The education coordinator frequently visits NFE classes and has contacts with the villagers, the leaders and the fromal school teachers. This is how we get support from them," says a planning facilitator, who is a link between the IIE and the education coordinator. "Whenever the education coordinator goes to a class, he discusses things with the teacher and makes suggestions. The next time, he will watch whether the teacher is applying what was discussed."

A project team at the Institute does planning and keeps in contact with the field staff. Headed by a director, the team comprises four experts - one each for curriculum, materials, teacher training and evaluation-and 20 field staff (three planning facilitators and 17 education coordinators). The IIE staff have extensive training and research experience in rural education. Their job is to supervise and guide the field staff, supply equipment not available locally, prepare funding and budget proposals, including salaries, make progress reports and write about the project's implementation. The salaries of PROPEL's field staff, including NFE instructors and education coordinators, are paid into their accounts in rural banks located in the project area.

### **Stress- free Evaluations**

There are no exams in the NFE programme because uniform tests go against the principle of learning at one's own pace. Instead, apart from regular self-evaluation done by students with the help of simple testing materials, a children's fair is held every five-and-a-half month. Attended by students and instructors from several NFE centres in the same area, the fair is often the first chance girls have had to go outside

their village and take part in a celebration for their age-group. The host-village helps organise the fair and provides a hot lunch, drinking water and toilets. The children start by showing off their skills in story-telling, singing and drawing, games and sports, often rehearsed for several weeks. In the afternoon, after some rest, groups of children do tests marked by an external teacher on a detailed evaluation sheet. The sheets are used by both students and teachers and give each student a different goal to reach by the end of the next semester. Rather than a device to pass or fail students, the tests are seen as a means for them to assess their own progress and set goals for the next stage of learning. This way, the community also rallies around education: the fair lasts a day and the children take obvious pride and delight in sharing their achievements with an audience come from several villages to watch them.

### **Reaching Out to All Ages**

Although primary education is the core of PROPEL, putting education within reach of all other groups in the community has turned it into a broad rural development programme. All the following "support programmes" help mobilize the community in favour of schooling and in creating "a culture of education."

**Child Recreation Centres (CRC):** run for two hours every morning, their aim is to help the children's transition to the first grade through stimulating pre-school activities. In 1991-92 some 900 children between the ages of 3 and 6 were enrolled in 30 CRCs. Because of their popularity, some villages have started a second popularity, some villages have started a second CRC with local resources. Primary school teachers agree that children from CRCs "come to school neatly dressed. They are self-confident, regular and adjust well to school routine." Parents also see that their children learn to sing songs, tell stories, wash their hands before meals and insist on wearing clean clothes. Every six months, the children from the CRC gather to display their achievements to the villagers, so putting education on centre stage.

**Women's Development Groups** are attached to the CRCs and are a forum for discussing child development, population education, income-generating activities, nutrition, health and legal rights. "I told women

they would feel much happier if they didn't have to ask someone else to help them," said the organiser of one women's group. "Now they realize the importance of education and come regularly to our meetings." These are held once a week for two to three hours, often in the late evening, drawing the attention of villagers.

Because of the good relationship between the education of women and girls' school attendance, the PROPEL project had envisioned condensed primary courses for adult women. But there were no takers, mainly because older girls and women saw no benefit in this kind of education at their age. They asked instead for skills-training to increase their income. As a result, the project is seeking suitable occupational training courses for women organised by other voluntary agencies, which emphasizes the need for partnerships at grassroots level for economic and social development.

**Jana Shikshan Nilayams** (People's Education Houses) have been set up to provide reading material for everyone, from children to semi-skilled and fluent readers. Literate parents borrow storybooks to read to their children. These centres, run by a part-time worker, create an educational climate in villages by organising handwriting competitions, community reading of daily newspapers, performances of plays, sports events, games and fairs and celebration of festivals. Several days a week are reserved for women and girls. Newspapers, magazines, materials on health, hygiene, agriculture, science and technology were most in demand.

**Women's Camps** for boosting education and development of women and girls. The camps stress the importance of sending girls to school and help women change their traditional attitudes about the future of their daughters as wives and mothers. The positive impact of the camps on girls' education is noticeable in the PROPEL area: enrolment and attendance of girls in formal schools and NFE centres has improved; women attending the camps have immunized their children and can prepare the oral dehydration drink. In some communities, women have become members of Village Education Committees and the Panchayats.

**Training of VECs** for micro-planning and grassroots education. In 1991-92, 1,936 people, 581 of them women, took part in one-day orientation

sessions on identifying local education problems, planning educational facilities and activities, and enhancing village resources. Non-formal teaching and learning is explained and demonstrated. The project has produced booklets on local development planning and the role and function of VECs.

**Mobilizing the Panchayats:** while the VECs manage the educational activities of the community, the Panchayats are the top bodies in the villages, making important decisions about the community's entire development. Training Panchayat members to reduce their traditional dependence on government initiatives for development is a key aspect of microplanning. In the PROPEL project, all 85 panchayats involved in the project have received training.

### **Influencing the formal system**

The project does not see fromal and non-fromal primary education as parallel or competing systems, but as complementary ones. "What the country now needs is primary education which keeps to a universally accepted standard of learning achievement through a variety of mediators such as schools, centres, groups of voluntary teachers, in flexible time schedules and pedagogical approaches, and in a manner which makes people themselves take up responsibility to manage the system, with such help as they need from government," said Dr. Naik in "Collaborating for Educational Change", noting that these measures were being developed in PROPEL by training the Panchayats and the VECs.

From the start, PROPEL has sought collaboration with teachers in the fromal primary system to discuss the aims of an alternative educational channel and to invite them to help with household surveys. "Resistance from fromal school teachers and educational bureaucracy was a big problem in the initial stages", says Dr Naik. As time passed however, "non-interference with fromal schools and allowing teachers to observe the progress of PROPEL innovations removed their resistance." Besides recognizing that PROPEL was backed at the state and district levels, teachers saw the rapid achievements of NFE-centre students in language and arithmetic and the good scholastic level of children seeking to switch

from non-formal centers to formal schools. Formal school teachers also reported a marked increase in enrolment of 6 to 8-year-old girls in project areas, which they attribute to PROPEL's support programmes like the CRCs and women's groups.

Their request to use the project's teaching-learning materials led to a programme in 1991 to "non-formalize" grades I and II. During one-day orientation sessions once a month, primary school teachers learnt how to motivate children and create a cheerful atmosphere in the classroom and outside. As well as the materials supplied no NFE centres, they also received special booklets of stories and songs. The project team found that the small groups and systematic but informal style of the training programme led teachers to express their opinions and ideas. Role-playing helped them overcome initial awkwardness about singing songs and telling stories in a lively way.

Three innovative activities were tied to this orientation programme. In 40 schools, welcomes, were organised for first-graders on the first day of school. Senior students sang songs and offered a flower to each child. Villagers gave each new child sweets and token gifts like pencils and erasers and the new entrant introduced himself/herself. This ceremony emphasizes that the first day of school should be an exciting and special experience, and a memory throughout life for the child.

All students took part in Independence Day (August 15) and Republic Day (January 26) celebrations by giving a cultural performance before the village community which included songs, story-telling, reading out passages, making little speeches and orally solving a few sums. It made teachers and children proud and greatly helped the community to appreciate schooling and participate in transforming the school into a community-based institution. Finally, instead of setting aside days for examinations, teachers conducted regular tests and evaluations as "learning exercises" and reported that children were eager to do them.

PROPEL's attempt to make the rural primary school more responsive to children's needs grew out of the favourable assessment by teachers of the NFE programme, echoing J.P. Naik's vision that success outside the system can eventually change conditions within it. In the

PROPEL project, the alternatives of full-time formal education and part-time nonformal education are coming closer together to complement each other as communities have been mobilized and helped to decide their own education future.

### **Obstacles: Poverty and Early Marriage**

Irregular attendance is the most common problem of NFE centres. poverty, negative parental attitudes, early marriage and migration to towns or other villages lead to dropping out, endangering the NFE centre. "In NFE centres, girls outnumber boys. So in some classes, the girls get married and we have to stop the work. If there are 15 students in NFE centres and five to six are married, the remaining students feel that it's not necessary to go there, because their friends have left. They come in groups of two or three and when the group leader goes, the others stay at home," says a PROPEL staff member. Diaries of education coordinators reveal many cases of girls leaving due to early marriage. "Parents try to marry off their daughters as soon as possible, because they are poor," says an education coordinator. "It's also a question of superstition and rituals, because 12 and 13-year old girls marry" even though the official minimum age of marriage for girls is 18. VEC members and education coordinators visit parents of students who attend irregularly and try to change their attitude towards learning. As one education coordinator explains, this has to be done on a regular basis: "If parents do not believe in the first place, they are contacted again and again and told how important it is to educate the children in these NFE classes. They are also invited to the class and shown what goes on in the hope they will understand how important it is to attend regularly."

Whenever possible, the NFE instructor and the education coordinator keep in touch with children who drop out of the programme. They are given self-learning and other reading materials from the NFE centres and guidance from the instructor. Girls who get married and stay in the same village are also encouraged to continue their studies or become involved in other PROPEL programmes, such as the women's development groups.

In isolated tribal hamlets with only three to four school-age children, it is not possible to establish an NFE centre. The project therefore

encourages the Panchayats in which these hamlets are included to choose volunteers to coach the children. A training programme is made available to these volunteer instructors, who visit the hamlets by arrangement with the learners.

The project works closely with local authorities, making it vulnerable to factional politics, especially at election time. The project staff tries to reduce contact with communities before and during local elections to minimize the effect of political clashes over the programme. But NFE instructors are more easily caught in the crossfire. Some NFE centres have been closed because teachers were involved in politics. In one, several parents stopped sending their children because the instructor was a candidate of a political party they did not support.

Winning co-operation from government functionaries has been an uphill battle. While they have not obstructed the project, they are sometimes reluctant to share power with the Village Education Committees. "The fear of losing control explains their confused response," explains Dr Naik. Nevertheless, she expects co-operation to increase in the next few years in light of the 1993 ACT of Parliament requiring state governments to decentralize administrative and financial powers to the village level.

### **Resources: Winning State Recognition**

The project has not run into serious financial problems. At its 1979 launch, which coincided with the International Year of the Child, it received funding from UNICEF and the state of Maharashtra. In the second phase, the Ford Foundation gave a three-year US \$110,000 grant because of its interest in improving the socio-economic status of rural women. Government's approval of the IIE model in 1985-86 was proof of a welcome change in official attitudes towards NGOs. In its third stage, the government has supported innovations in primary education for the underprivileged.

Since 1988, the project has received approximately Rs. 800,000 (US \$28,000) per year from the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The IIE has borne the cost of some materials and honoraria

out of its own funds collected through donations. The director of the project has not taken a salary or honorarium since the project began in 1979. Despite recent improvements, the state government's attitude towards voluntary organisations tends to be characterized by indifference, occasional distrust and sometimes fear, says Dr Naik. "Governmental structures and procedures still remain more or less colonial (...) If voluntary agencies receive government grants, they are suspected of misuse of funds and are subjected to unimaginative audits which interfere with programmes. If they are successfully, there is fear that government officials would be undervalued and blamed for not performing well." At some stage or another, the PROPEL project has come up against these attitudes.

The cost factor of innovations is also important: like many other NFE programmes, PROPEL is acceptable to educational planners because it costs about a third as much as full-time primary education. The ratio of teacher to non-teacher costs was also 60:40, compared with 95:5 in the full-time system.

### Achievements and Lessons

PROPEL has been likened to a kaleidoscope, reflecting its ever-evolving and all-encompassing approach to development. "This is mainly why the programme has been successful," says an education coordinator. "The communities think of it as their own programme." PROPEL's experience shows that genuine community participation is possible if the project starts out based on local needs and conditions. Some of PROPEL's most important assets are:

An approach which puts management of education in the hands of communities, reviving a pre-colonial tradition of village schools. This responsibility cannot be assumed overnight: it requires training in planning, running and monitoring educational programmes. "Initially, awakening the communities was the main problem," says Dr. Naik. "The main strategy for solving this has been to stimulate community initiatives to plan and implement an interrelated cluster of education activities, through the Village Education Committee set up by the entire community." From the outset, IIE fieldworkers took time to weave

relationships at village level, not only with NFE instructors, but also with primary school teachers, local leaders and the community at large.

"We take into account all their views and attitudes, then we discuss these new patterns," says one staff member. "We give as much time as we can, because people's education takes a lot of time. It takes time to go to communities, and sit there and discuss things." No aspect of the programme has been planned or implemented without collaboration between local authorities, field staff and the IIE's project team.

The expertise and commitment of the IIE staff, and their "action-research" approach which encourages participation and self-examination, has made the programme a guide for voluntary agencies around the country working in non-formal education. 65 voluntary organisations have begun to use the IIE model of non-formal education in Maharashtra, reaching 75,000 pupils. In the next few years, PROPEL will concentrate upon training representatives of voluntary agencies and district-level government functionaries in micro-education through community mobilization. A request has been made to the ministry of Human Resource Development to provide some funds for setting up a special cell at the IIE specifically for training.

A flexible, locally-relevant programme. The child is at the centre of this approach. From locating the NFE centre as close to students' homes as possible to developing a curriculum and lively learning methods based on local environment, PROPEL has reached 4,500 children, 3,000 of them girls. When asked what they like best about the NFE centres, children mention songs, drama, story-telling and games, indicating the importance of learning through play. "Children feel they don't come to the centres just for education, but also for recreation," says an education coordinator. Seeing the achievements of students attending NFE centres, formal schools have begun to adopt some of PROPEL's methods in grades I and II.

The PROPEL project shows that it is not time exposure but good teaching that guarantees the quality of learning. Through group work and the principle of "mastery-learning," NFE pupils reached 70 per cent of the expected levels of competence according to one evaluation. Tests showed

that the student performance in NFE centres was better than that of formal school children at the same class-level, although NFE students tend to be older and more mature than their counterparts in the formal system. The project also shows that achievements in the non-formal sector can influence the formal primary school, and eventually lead to better quality and retention.

Appointing local teachers reinforces the community dimension of the project. The informal teaching atmosphere encourages children to look on their instructors as brothers and sisters. Instructors' regular contacts with education coordinators and recurrent training are also key strategies for maintaining motivation and quality.

Making the benefits of education visible to all. The community is welcome to visit the NFE centres at any time. Through children's fairs, celebrations on Independence Day and other events, the whole community becomes aware of the programme's influence on children's lives.

Putting education within reach of all age groups has boosted enrollments, especially of girls. Communities have become more aware of the importance of education, and parents have noticed changes in their children's attitudes. PROPEL's support programmes have started to create the foundations for a learning society.

Drawing professional groups into the educational challenge: in project areas, agricultural experts, doctors and staff from primary health centres have given talks to VECs and women's groups. One female doctor wrote a women's folk play on the "birth of a girl-child" and offered to organise health-camps for children and women. Officials from cooperative banks have told groups about their schemes for savings, investment and loans.

### **Conclusion**

Since its founding, the IIE has firmly believed local people hold the keys to development and social change. In Maharashtra, some 283 villages have succeeded in reaching out-of-school children and turning education into a community initiative. This has been a catalyst for a much deeper change in attitudes toward gender bias and poverty. Lifted

from the restraints of a classroom's four walls, education tailored to local needs and managed by the people can drive the whole community forward. Support programmes for young children and women have increased demand for primary education.

The programme challenges myths that parents are unwilling to educate their girls: "My daughter will be able to educate her own children because she has learned in the centre. Her life will be different from mine," says one mother. "Because we ourselves couldn't learn, we want to give a chance to our children. Education helps girls take better care of themselves, their hygiene and their own children," said one woman in a village meeting. "It's important that if problems come up, girls know something about their rights."

Seeing children speaking confidently in public, paying attention to cleanliness and helping their siblings in the formal school with homework have all created an awareness in the community of education's importance and furthered the demand for schooling. "We must make our children more literate," said one mother. "After all, we can't depend on farming any more. The rains are erratic here so they need an alternative income, a regular job."

If education For All is to be achieved in developing countries, non-formal programmes have to be considered acceptable channels of education. In the long term, Dr Naik envisages two complementary channels for basic education in India, but warns against "formalizing" the NFE system by staffing it with teachers who are products of the formal system.

The common thread running through PROPEL's action in both channels is an emphasis on making education part of community life. This can only happen through decentralization, collaboration and partnerships, key strategies of India's education policy. PROPEL has first reached children, especially girls, who hold otherwise never have had the chance to learn. Secondly, it has shown that more lively, participatory teaching and greater community awareness about the importance of education can stem the tide of dropouts and increase the quality of education, bringing universal elementary education a step closer.

Because such programmes must be tailored to local conditions and problems they must be the fruit of community action. PROPEL's strength lies in the expertise it has gained in training people at the grassroots to take responsibility for education. In the course of this evolution, the project has broadened children's horizons, allowing them to think and talk about their future with confidence.

## 4

# VILLAGE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

### Introduction

Mali, a land which covers a vast area of sub-Saharan Africa, with no outlet to the sea, is essentially a rural country. Industrial activity is extremely limited. The country's mineral resources are as yet barely exploited and output from the agricultural sector, although it is the source of the greater part of its income from exports, is subject to the fluctuations of the world market and to the ravages caused by periods of drought and invasion by locust, making Mali one of the poorest countries of the world.

Although economically poor, Mali has a rich culture and history. Many peoples - the Bambara, Bobo, Bozo, Dogon, Kasonke, Malinke, Moors, Minianka, Peuls, Sarakole, Senoufo, Songhai, Tama-sheks, Tukulors - have coexisted for centuries in a glorious mixture of languages and traditions.

The principle of primary education for all has long been firmly established. The Constitution guarantees the right of every Malian to education and the main objectives already laid down by the educational reform of 1962 were the encouragement of high quality mass education and the democratization of education by the development of basic education and literacy.

Furthermore, of all the countries of West Africa, Mali has the longest experience of literacy initiatives - it was selected as the pilot country for the Experimental World Literacy Programme and the first literacy centers

were opened there in 1968. More recently, after playing an active part in the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, Mali became further committed to the struggle against illiteracy. Democracy came to Mali in March 1991, with the investiture of Alpha Oumar Konare as President - the first Head of State of Mali to be democratically elected.

The present government of the Third Republic includes a minister of Basic Education and, as further proof of its dedication, devotes nearly a quarter of its budget to education. At least three-quarters of this goes to running cost, mainly teachers' salaries.

There is, however, a wide gap between intentions and reality. Enormous obstacles still stand in the way of social, economic and cultural development. Despite repeated official affirmations in favour of access to education, Mali still has one of the world's lowest rates of primary school attendance - about 20 per cent - which, in view of the high rate of population growth, represents a steady diminution since 1980.

Alphar Oumar Konare is well aware of this. Questioned on the matter in April 1993, he replied: "Democracy takes time [...]. The democratic foundations of the State can never be fully consolidated without the massive participation of the rural populations. They will remain fragile as long as the literacy rate in the Republic of Mali remains so low. Learning to read and write is an affirmation of liberty. It is a *sine qua non* of a greater involvement in the democratic management of affairs. The country is in a serious situation. We have fought for democratic change, but fewer and fewer people have access to decent schooling; this is a harsh blow to democracy [...]. Guaranteeing a democratic way of life means improving and extending the basic education system."

This is a challenge that the village schools are doing their utmost to take up.

#### **Education in Action**

When visitors arrive, the children stand up and start to chorus the Malian national anthem, which they sing in their mother tongue

Bamanankan (Bambara). The classroom is filled by thirty children , aged about ten, boys and girls in equal number, their brightly-coloured dresses, shirts, bedizened T-shirts and the girls' kerchiefs, multi-coloured necklaces and earrings bringing a welcome touch of colour to offset the corrugated iron roof, bare walls and earth floor. The anthem completed, the children sit down again and take up their tasks.

This morning, as nearly every morning for the past six months, they have come to study with *their* teacher, in *their* school, in *their* village. The class is a lively one and there is great competition to attract the attention of the teacher so as to be questioned. On this occasion a girl has been called upon. With obvious pleasure she goes up to the blackboard and deciphers the word written upon it. Syllable by syllable she recites them aloud, pointing with a ruler at each word as she goes along. The whole class repeats each word after her at the top of their voices.

Later in the morning, they go on the other exercises. Using short sticks they do adding up exercises, which they then transfer to their slates. Again, one of the pupils goes to the blackboard and, turning to face the class and brandishing his sticks, counts out loud. The class, in chorus, repeats his additions with enthusiasm.

Classes last two hours, during which time the children have had lessons in reading, writing and mathematics, have expressed themselves orally and have performed other sensory exercises, under the guidance of a teacher and his or her deputy. This is how a typical school day goes at Neguela, Ntiobala, Dontereke, or in any one of the fifty or so village schools in the Kolondieba administrative district.

At first sight, this school appears to be just like many other primary schools throughout the world. Yet it differs in one striking way - it is the village school, independent of the State and owning its existence entirely to the will and the combined efforts of the whole village community, which wanted it to be established. Otherwise, barely two years earlier, the majority of the children who attend it today would have had no chance whatever to go to school and to learn to read, write and count.

## An Obstacle to be Overcome

The Sikasso Region in the south of Mali, which borders on the Côte d'Ivoire, is by no means the poorest part of the country. On the contrary, precipitation is abundant during the rainy season making this a favorable area for agriculture. The main crops grown are cotton and rice.

It was in this area that, in 1987, the American non-governmental organization Save the Children/USA decided to give assistance in response to a call for help from the Malian Government. Originally the objective was to help settle the Dogons and other nomadic peoples who had been driven down from the north by the great droughts of 1970 and 1980. A preliminary study led to the choice of the District of Kolondieba, where both the administration and the people had shown themselves to be more ready than most to welcome these immigrants looking for humid lands on which to raise their cattle.

The District of Kolondieba has a population of some 140,000 inhabitants spread over 207 villages the largest of which, the small town of Kolondieba, has a population of 6,000. The district, which covers an area of 9,000 square kilometers, has virtually no infrastructure. There is no electricity and there are no tarmac roads.

From the start Save the Children/USA took advantage of the existence of community organizations, including village associations and the traditional "ton" or "age groups", on the basis of which it was able to set up in each village committees responsible for each of the four initial areas of activity - water, agriculture, health and credit, savings and small businesses. The programme was not imposed from the outside. Proposals were made and these were negotiated with each Village Chief and with each council of Elders, that is, with those with whom real authority lies in each village (cf. *Diamogo - a Village without a School*).

During the first two years action was limited to fifteen pilot villages, with the exception of the health programme which, from 1988, aimed to cover all 207 villages in the district. However, the programme soon came up against a major obstacle. Despite the functional literacy campaigns undertaken previously by the *compagnie Malienne pour le développement*

*des Textiles* (CMDT), directed particularly towards men, illiteracy remained widespread within a population that proved to be incapable of making rational use of hygienically-produced water supplies, of maintaining and managing wells and agricultural equipment or of keeping accounts.

Furthermore, the prospect of rapid improvement was slight. for the approximately 30,000 children of the Kolondieba district of school age there were only thirty primary schools, attended by 4,321 pupils (a school attendance rate of just 14 per cent). Thirteen of these schools were situated in the five largest villages. For the other 202 villages there were only seventeen schools which received children from the surrounding village. To attend school, therefore pupils had to walk several kilometers every morning and evening or else be accommodate on the spot. These problems led to considerable repetition, failure and drop-out, as well as sexual discrimination, and affected girls in particular.

In 1988, therefore, Save the Children/USA added an education element to its programme. This involved a literacy campaign for adults, with a special emphasis on women, and providing support for primary schools (supplies for primary schools in the district and the organization of sporting and leisure activities). In a typical village in which these initial activities took place in Kolondieba there were, at the start, only half a dozen literate people, two of whom had been to school. At the end of the first year 320 people had become literate, of whom 40 per cent were women. Encouraging though this result was, it was not sufficient to guarantee the long-term efficacy and continuity of all the elements of the programme after the cessation of external assistance.

In 1991, Save the Children/USA gave its backing to a project set up by the Ministry of Basic Education and financed by the World bank through the Fund for Aid to Basic Education. Within the framework of this project, the World Bank lent the Government of Mali 75 per cent of the cost of building permanent, three-classroom schools in accordance with current standards (the cost per classroom was about US\$10,000), the remaining quarter of the cost being borne by the village communities in which the schools were built. Since this amount (US\$7,500) was usually

beyond the village budgets, Save the Children/USA agreed to assume this cost at the rate of one school per year, which was done in 1991 and 1992. At this rate, however, it would have taken two centuries to equip each village with a school. The alternative, it seemed, would have been to invest a minimum of US\$6 million over the next ten years to provide the 621 classrooms needed for the 207 villages of the Kolondieba District - something that was clearly out of the question, at least for Save the children/USA.

### In Partnership with the Community

In 1992, deeply impressed by an innovation in basic education introduced in Bangladesh and known as BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), Save the children/USA decided to adopt the Bangladeshi approach whilst adapting it to the Malian context. As a result, a new model school was conceived - soon dubbed "The village school" - based on the following hypotheses:

- it should be possible to reduce the cost of primary schooling (without affecting its quality) by adapting it to the realities of the communities involved and to the resources available;
- subject to the provision of adequate training, each community should have the necessary financial and human resources to be able to provide and maintain quality primary education for its own children;
- the national political climate lent itself to the decentralization of education and conditions were propitious for good collaboration between the government, the non-governmental organizations and the communities.

From the start, Save the Children/USA gambled on obtaining the true, wholehearted and lasting commitment of the communities involved. There was never any question of acting in their place but rather of helping those village communities wanting to do so to provide their children with the possibility of getting an education. In view of the reluctance of many families to send their children to be educated in a school system in which they had lost all confidence, this certainly was a gamble. The attitude of many rural Malians is summed up by the question: "What is the use of

sending our children to school if it does not guarantee them a good future and in addition deprives us of the help we need to cultivate the land?" What the Save the "Children/USA project was gambling on was that, despite everything, there was nevertheless an unsatisfied demand for education to which the communities themselves would be prepared to respond.

The villagers themselves were to build their schools, with Save the Children/USA supplying the materials needed - corrugated iron for the roof, metal-framed doors and windows, the sanitary equipment for two latrines, desks and benches, a blackboard, a table, a chair and a storm lantern - for a total, cost of about 240,000 F.CFA (Francophone African Community Francs), or US\$1,200, about thirty times less than the cost of an official primary school. Save the Children/USA also undertook to provide the educational materials (books, paper pens and pencils, etc.) for the first year, at a cost of about US\$300.

In principle, enrolment was to be restricted to children of the village, with a special effort being made to give girls equal access, the ultimate aim being to have one school per village attended by boys and girls in equal numbers.

The teachers were to be reliable, respected members of the village community. Literate in the Bambara language, they had to have spent five years in a formal school or have been previously trained by Save the Children/USA as literacy teachers. The village community would be entirely responsible for their salaries. Each pupil's family would make a monthly contribution of 100 F.CFA, (about US\$0.40) with the Village Association paying a monthly allowance of 500 F.CFA (about US\$2). Thus in a class with thirty pupils, each teacher would receive a salary of 3,500 F.CFA (about US\$12.80) a month. The teachers would work two to three hours a day and be free to use the rest of their time working in the fields or in other activities. In comparison, the average basic salary of a teacher in a formal primary school is about 30,000 F.CFA a month (about US\$110).

The curriculum covers a three-year period during which the pupils receive instruction in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils are

also taught as much as possible about village life, health, work and local activities as well as being given information that will be useful to them in daily life in general. School terms are fixed to fit in with the rhythms of agricultural activities. School begins in November, at the end of the harvest, and continues up to the beginning of the rainy season in May. Pupils spend two to three hours a day in class, six days a week, over six and a half months of the year.

Each school consists of two classes with thirty pupils in each class, one for 6-to 10-year olds, who may go on to attend formal schooling after a period of three years in the village school, and one for 11-to 15-year-olds who may thereafter become involved in local community activities, such as the village credit, health and agriculture committees.

Each village has to set up a School Management Committee consisting of village personalities, parents of pupils and at least one literate person. The committees are responsible for the supervision of the schools, the recruitment of pupils, control of the teachers and the maintenance of the school building. In order to be able to do this they are trained by people acting for Save the Children/USA.

For its part, Save the Children/USA undertakes to meet all those needs that the village cannot meet itself, such as the training of teachers, the drawing up of teaching manuals and general supervision. It works in close collaboration with various official partners including, primarily, the Ministry of Basic Education and a number of specialized national organizations. It works particularly closely with the *Direction nationale de l'alphabétisation et de la linguistique appliquée* (DNAFLA) and even more closely with the Institute *Pédagogique National* (IPN). Save the Children/USA also receives backing from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

During a stay in the United States, two members of the staff of Save the Children/USA benefited from the advice of specialists at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, on the drawing up of non-formal educational programmes in collaboration with the target communities.

## A Promising Start

In August 1992, field officers of Save the children/USA held lengthy discussions with villagers from communities in which the organization was already active with a view to determining which of the communities fulfilling the criteria established for the project were prepared to accept all the conditions and to embark on a first experimental year. Initially, five "pilot" villages (one per sector of the district) were selected, but two of these withdrew saying that they preferred to await the installation of a formal school (in fact, they later changed their minds and figure among the twenty-two communities that created village schools in 1993/94).

A four-week experimental try-out was first undertaken in a sixth village, in October 1992. Its primary objective was to test the teachers' pedagogical capabilities; it was carried out by the training staff of Save the Children/USA and the IPN. The subjects touched on included basic pedagogics, methodologies for the basic teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic, and the planning of courses. In the evenings meetings were held at which teachers in training were able to discuss with their instructors such questions as the importance of education in general, the role of the teacher in the villages, discipline in the classroom, the participation of girls, the role of the School Committee and the maintenance of school buildings.

In November of the same year, therefore, three village schools were opened. To these were added a fourth in January 1993 - in the village in which the four-week experiment had been made. So great had been the success of these four weeks that the children and parents of the village had asked Save the Children/USA to establish a school there. This was a major victory for the staff of Save the Children/USA, since the village was renowned for its opposition over the years to the creation of a formal school in the neighbourhood.

Whilst awaiting completion of permanent school buildings, classes were held under the shade of a mango tree, under a straw shelter or in an already existing literacy center. The schools were open six days a week, the villagers having generally selected market day as the day they remained closed. During the first year, the schools were supervised by

Save the Children/USA staff members (community development officers, organizers of activities for women, village health workers) who had received special basic training for this task. Each school maintained "comments diary" and each teacher kept an "attendance register" which enabled a check to be kept on any possible absenteeism, especially amongst the girls. In February 1993, Save the Children/USA organized a two-week revision course.

The experiment was conclusive. Virtually no absenteeism or dropping out was recorded and equality between the sexes had been respected. The results achieved by the pupils also proved very satisfactory - 87 per cent of them obtained the pass mark enabling them to go on to the second year and they had acquired a generally satisfactory knowledge of the alphabet and of figures and of such operation as addition and subtraction.

It became clear that the village communities really saw the village schools as their schools and were already thinking of the need to ensure their continued existence. For example, all the villages had taken steps to establish funds to ensure the payment of their teachers in the eventuality that some parents might not be able to contribute individually. One village even decided on their own account to double the teachers' salaries.

As one member of the Council of Elders of Ntiobala pointed out: "In the past, when you received a letter, you had to go for miles to find somebody who could read it for you. Today, more and more young people are able to write in Bambara. This must continue and no effort is too great to preserve this advantage which we, the Elders, never had."

Finally, the demand remains high. By mid 1994, fifty villages had asked Save the Children/USA for the creation of a village school (twenty-two have already been created in 1993/94 and in 1994/95 the total should rise to over fifty).

The staff of Save the Children/USA are enthusiastic about the future: "Given the low cost of the village schools and the involvement of the village communities, we can reasonably expect that, by the year 2000, there will be 'education for all' and a school in every village in Kolondieba."

## Towards Equality of the Sexes

Girls are the main victims of the deficiencies of the formal school system and only 8.7 per cent of them attend school. When the nearest school is too far away and the children have to be lodged away from their families, the fee paid to the receiving family represents a considerable effort. A choice has to be made among the children and this is usually to the detriment of the girls. The current rate for lodging a child is two sacks of millet and 2,500 F.CFA. The millet is often soon eaten and the money spent. The lodging conditions of the child become precarious. He or she is often forced to carry out household tasks. This is particularly the case for girls who are not allowed to go to school until they have finished cleaning the hut and done the washing the hut and done the washing up.

One of the major achievement of the village school, at the end of the first experimental year, is to have ensured respect for the equality of the sexes among the pupils. This seems to indicate that there is no real taboo with regard to the education of girls despite the tradition of early marriage which means that the girls are usually engaged buy the age of 11 or 12 and already married at the age of 14.

Furthermore, Save the Children/USA hopes to achieve equal representation of the sexes among the teaching staff so as to enhance the role of women in the community and also to maintain a certain stability, since women are less likely to travel far from their village in search of work. However, given the extremely low rate of literacy among women (5 per cent for women as against 15 per cent for men), this objective is difficult to achieve. Over the first two years of the project only a quarter of the teaching posts have been occupied by women. Minata Kone is one of these. She teaches at the village school at Ntiobala, where she was born. She is also the daughter of the Head of the village. She is 22 years old, the mother of two children and went to school up to and including the sixth year of primary education. She was chosen by the villagers to go to Kolondieba to take the training course organized by Save the Children/ USA and IPN. She went with the full assent of her family and, in particular, of her husband, who is himself literate.

Today she feels different from the other women of the village. "It is a privilege to teach", she says, "since it enables one to express oneself and to make oneself heard among the men." Her position gives her another far form inconsiderable privilege — in her family she is excused from preparing meals and taking part in the work in the fields.

### Blazing the Trail for NGOs

Kolondieba is only one District among many in Mali and Save the Children/USA does not claim to have the answer to the basic education needs of the entire country. Other NGOs have a contribution to make to this task and Save the Children/USA can give them the benefit of its experience in this field. In this respect the task has been made easier because, in November 1993, the former Programme Co-ordinator of Save the Children/USA became the full-time Co-ordinator a Pivot Group for Basic Education which today brings together some seventy NGOs, both national and international, operating in this field in Mali. In view of the important role Suleiman Kante played in the conception and setting up of the Village Schools Programme, there can be little doubt that he will encourage other NGOs to put it into practice.

In December 1993, the branch of Save the Children/USA in Mali asked USAID for funding amounting to nearly US\$8 million for the period 1994 to 2000. This total allows for direct expenditure by Save the Children/USA, the financing of ten Malian NGOs, the strengthening of the literacy programme at Kolondieba, the development of equipment and teaching material, and a contingency fund for various costs and unforeseen expenditures.

Justifying this request, Peter Laugharn, the present Director of Save the Children/USA in Mali, explains: "Save the Children/USA intends to work with 10 Malian NGOs to help 600 villages in 20 Districts to create their own community schools. The project will enable 36,000 children in the rural areas (half of them girls) to learn to read in their mother tongue and to pursue their studies in the formal education system. The main recurring costs of these schools, such as teachers' salaries, will be funded locally so that the schools will be able to continue to function when the project ends and to recruit 12,000 new pupils each

year. There should also be a significant multiplier effect, since the model can easily be adopted by neighboring villages. The annual cost per pupil is estimated at US\$35.86. About half of the village schools' budget will go to Malian NGOs to cover their training and supervision activities in the field. The Village School Project should provide these 10 specialize NGOs with an excellent opportunity to specialize in educational programming which will lead on to the formation of a future nucleus of 'entrepreneurial social skills' in education, whose attention will be directed particularly towards the under-represented poor." In spring 1994 the staff of Save the Children/USA were on hand to organize a workshop at Kolondieba for Malian NGOs at which the theme was 'The Conception of a Village Schools Programme'.

### **... and for the Ministry of Basic Education**

"Basic Education for All in a profound political choice and current difficulties can do nothing to shake our determination to achieve this goal."

These words of the Minister of Basic Education, M. Samassekou, leave no room for doubt - Basic education is the major priority in Mali today and initiatives such as that of Save the Children/USA need to be publicized and supported. In their own way the village schools have taught the government a thing or two and were the direct inspiration for the governmental programme which began in March governmental programme which began in march 1944 with the opening of the first twenty centres *d'éducation pour le développement*(CED).

"There is an urgent need to face up to the problem of the rapid growth in the number of children of school age who have no access to the formal education system as it is now constituted. The minimum education needs of these young people are enormous and, in view of the limitations of the formal education system, it is essential to explore educational paths, especially in non-formal education which today must be seen as having priority. With this in mind, the Ministry of Basic Education has proposed an alternative strategy for expansion of basic education through the *centres d'éducation pour le développement* (CED)". These words appear in the document published at the time of the setting up of the first twenty centres

in the Koulikoro Region. In fact, the strategy, the objectives and the modalities of setting up these centres are an exact copy of those adopted for the village schools. The socio-pedagogical principles adopted with regard to the environment, organization and contents of the centres are perfect demonstration of this emulation, so closely do they follow those of the village schools. There is however one difference. The centres allow for only one age group, from 9 to 15, whereas the village schools recruit two distinct age groups, children aged from 6 to 10 and from 11 to 15.

There is absolutely no equivocation about the nature of the programme. "It is not a question here of the classic downward approach from top to bottom, the approach adopted by educational technocrats (even the most experienced), but of the meeting of two partners - the providers, from the Ministry to the Rural Development Operation and the NGOs, and the decision-makers/beneficiaries. It is essential for the 'traditional beneficiaries' (that is, the communities, parents and children) to be seen also as the decision-makers, to accept them as such and, in so doing, give them the room they need to manage the education system which they need and they plan." As the Minister also said: "There can be no lasting development unless it is truly taken in hand by the people themselves."

As if echoing these words, the Head of the village of Ntiobala, in the Kolondieba District, encountered during a visit to the village school, declared: "The State is everyone, all of us. The State of Mali does not have the means to educate all the children. We the children of the State, must stretch out our hands to the State so that it can take them and we can all go forward together. This is a moral obligation which must be assumed. Today, without education, without a minimum level of knowledge, one will get nowhere. It is very difficult to educate an adult. For an adult the effort of concentration need to learn is often very painful. A child, however thirsts for knowledge and children can go far, even in just three years. Even if schooling has to stop then, those three years will be enough to make the difference throughout his or her life."

### **Prospects for the Future**

Despite the strength of the convictions of the Head of the village, as expressed in these words, a number of questions inevitably rise as to

the future. For example, is a three-year cycle enough to guarantee teaching of a high quality? Is the choice of a national language as the language of teaching a wise one? What lies ahead for the children when they leave after three years in a village school?

It is impossible, today, to answer the first question with any certainty. We will have to wait for an assessment to be sure that the children have not been given a second rate education "on the cheap". All we can do at present is to quote the oft-repeated declarations of intent, on the lines of: "Better a minimum of education than no education at all." We can, however, also mention the provisional observations of representatives of the formal school system, who can hardly be suspected of indulgence. The Director of the formal school of Zeguere declared that: "village schools are good idea because we have the same objective - to fight illiteracy in the area." Using a formula that is becoming fashionable, a pedagogical counsellor from Bougouni boldly affirmed: "It is a comforting prospect, within the context of basic education for all - a minimum of quality education for a maximum number children." He went on to say: "Judging by the lessons I have attended in the village schools. I can assure you that the level of understanding is good. In fact there is very little difference as compared with the formal school system since the village school teachers have been trained by the experts of IPN." Time alone will tell.

The question of the choice of language in which instruction is given (one of the national languages) and the introduction of instruction in French during the final year (French is the administrative and official language), whether in the village schools or the CEDs, has also raised a few doubts. Will the children be able to apply in French the skills acquired in national languages? The results of an experimental testing carried out in the formal school system in October 1979 were inconclusive.

Having studied the project for the creation of the CEDs, within the framework of a UNESCO/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) mission on literacy training in Mali, consultant Guy Belloncle has his doubts. "How can one expect the centres to succeed in three years when the formal schools are now failing over six, seven or even eight

years? As French schools know only too well, because of its etymologically based spelling, teaching French is real gamble." For him, however, all hope is not lost, for he adds: "But this does not mean that one should deprive all those who show exceptional intelligence of promotion [...]. Thanks to present methods of teaching French as a foreign language, it might be thought possible to give children who want to pursue their studies in French the basic structures and to do so in a period of one year." Guy Belloncle recommends the introduction of "what might be called initiation to functional, oral communication with officials or during periods spent in towns", using sound and pictures, as is already being done in two experimental schools in Segou. Children should also be trained to read the more common signs and notices (Hospital, Police Station, Customs Office, etc.) so as to enable them to find them in the towns.

Others maintain that "one learns to read and write once only". These people base their opinion on the theories of specialists who consider that a person who has learned to read and write in his or her mother tongue, thanks to a kind of positive transfer of capacities acquired in this language to second language, generally manages to master reading and writing in this second language without great difficulty, whether it be some kind of lingua franca or another national language.

At all events, the Malian Minister of Basic Education has long had his own profoundly held conviction. During the course of an interview he declared that: "It is not possible for a people to develop in disregard of its own language. All our children must be firmly rooted in their own culture whilst remaining open to the universal."

Inevitably, the future facing children at the end of their three years of attendance at a village school remains uncertain. Two options are open to them. Either they continue their studies - but if so, what line of education is open to them? - or they find immediate use at the local level for their newly acquired skills. The problem lies above all in the choice of the first option and can be summed up in terms of the need for some kind of linking mechanism.

Assuming that the formal school system will be prepared to accept children after their third year at a village school ("The village school

can be a means of bringing 'recalcitrants' back to the formal school system", the director of the second cycle at Kolondieba declared confidently), it is not certain that the pupils will be capable of making this jump or how the transfer will be effected.

Here again Guy Belloncle advises caution. "I do not think that it would be possible to envisage their integration into the formal school system as it is at present at whatever level, for pedagogical rather than linguistic reason. Many experiments carried out through the world have shown the almost insurmountable obstacles which stand in the way of transferring of pupils from institutions in which education is active and participative and aimed at giving the pupil the maximum autonomy to classic institutions where the teacher is seen as the sole fount of all knowledge.

Two possiblilites remain to be examined:

- a) integration of these pupils into a second cycle, itself re-thought and renovated (for example by prolonging the experiment now being carried out in two schools in Segou on the value of which the final evaluation should soon be pronouncing); or,
- b) the creation of a "special track" (a kind of second cycle of the CEDs) conceived of as a form of progressive transition towards technical and professional instruction rather than towards more general education.

All these questions are now the subject of indepth discussion between Save the Children/USA, the Ministry of Basic Education and the communities concerned, since it is a matter of urgency to find answers and to take enlightened decisions before the rapidly approaching time limits are reached.

One thing is certain, during visits to the village schools, those who use and benefit from them - children, parent and representatives of the communities - are inexhaustible in their expressions of enthusiasm and satisfaction. In this they will undoubtedly soon be hearing an echo at the very highest level, since the President of the Republic has expressed his

desire to visit the village schools of the District of Kolondieba in the near future.

The movement is well and truly launched and it will be allowed no respite. In the words of a woman of the village of Ntiobala: "When a bird is tired and comes to rest, it runs, the risk of being caught by the children who will pay with it. So long as it is in flight it is in no danger."

# 5

## NON-FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

### Introduction

“Three years ago, I woke up each morning, fetched water from the village well, pounded millet for the day, washed bowls and pots, took care of the children, cooked meals and kept silent about my problems and dreams!. I was like my mother and thought my girls would be the same as me. Today, things have changed. Working alongside other women, I have helped find solutions for many of our village problems, I am responsible for managing a project, and I am no longer afraid to speak out about my fears and hopes. Who could have imagined that I, Duusu Konate, could make such a difference in my community!”

These words from a Senegalese woman living in the village of Ker Simbara reflect the thoughts of many of the thousands of women who have participated in a basic education programme in national languages known as TOSTAN, or non-formal education for development.

In Wolof, spoken by 71 per cent of all Senegales, TOSTAN means “breakthrough”. It is a fitting name for a comprehensive, 18-month programme which goes beyond literacy to give adult learners the means to define and solve their problems, improve their family’s health and more generally, fight the age-old idea that all misfortunes are due to “fate”. The programme, developed with villagers over more than ten years, is tailored to local conditions and takes African culture as the starting point for analysing the present and making progress in the future.

With the success of the adult programme, TOSTAN developed a modular approach and methodologies to reach the thousands of Senegalese children who have never been to school and would have no chance to do so under the formal system. The programme, begun in villages where the adults have already been through the six modules, is presently in the experimental phase and other NGOs are also participating in the conception and implementation.

The culturally-sensitive programme is the idea of African and American scholars, as well as Molly Melching (given the name Sukkeyna Njaay), who came to Senegal in 1974 to complete a master's degree in African literature. She never left; instead she studied oral traditions, learned Wolof and worked with underprivileged children in Dakar before moving to a village, Saam Njaay, to explore further the relationship between culture and education.

Through extensive experiment and support from the Senegalese government, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), this team of non-formal education specialists developed a six-module programme in national languages, with detailed guides to help lead trainers and facilitators through the course. Since 1988, the programme has reached 15,000 adults in over 350 villages across Senegal. A 1992 evaluation said adult learners who had completed the basic education programme were more likely to vaccinate their children and use the oral rehydration solution, shared their knowledge with neighbouring villages, and favoured the course's problem-solving process as a way to improve their standard of living. Several non-governmental organizations have adopted the programme, which is in growing demand across Africa. Its success in linking writing, reading and math with life skills to deal with vital issues is one of its strongest selling points.

### **The Adult Programme: Tackling Illiteracy in Senegal**

A former French colony of 7.9 million people, Senegal lies on the west coast of Africa, a region with low access to and achievement in education. With only half of all children and just over one third of girls at

school age completing the primary education cycle, Senegal is similar to its Sahelian neighbours. In 1988, the literacy rate of women over 15 years was 25 per cent, for men it was 52 per cent. In this mainly rural country, there are entire villages in which not a single person has the rudiments of literacy.

Primary education usually begins at age 7, lasts for six years and, officially, is compulsory. In 1981, the "*ecole nouvelle*" aimed to life schools out of their colonial ways by giving them a more truly African character, better adapted to development needs. Reformers called for more scientific and technical training to reduce the country's dependence on revenue from its few export commodities (notably groundnuts and phosphates). In 1991, on the recommendation of an education commission, the country began a major decentralization programme as part of the effort to achieve 100 per cent school attendance for primary-age children by the year 2000. The commission called for more non-formal education and the gradual introduction of productive work and national languages into school programmes.

Since the early 1970s, the use of national languages in education has been increasingly stressed. Although French is the official language, only about a quarter of the population speak it, whereas Wolof is also the language in which Melching first started to work, by writing children's stories with African rather than French themes. In 1971, the Senegalese government recognized that the country had six languages: Wolof, Pulaar, Serer, Mandingo, Diola and Saraokole. Some ethnic groups, especially the Pulaar, have energetically defended their language, while at university level linguists have devoted extensive efforts to transcribe oral languages into written form. Three daily newspapers run a bi-weekly feature in three national languages, an initiative supported by UNICEF. SOFAA, a monthly newspaper published in Wolof and Pulaar, also provides in-depth articles on international and national events.

The government has recognized that literacy programmes work best when conducted in national languages, but the fight against illiteracy has been plagued by a severe lack of resources and poor coordination. No basic education programme in national languages existed in Senegal in

1987. At central government level, responsibility for literacy has often been tossed around between ministries. The absence of a well thought out national strategy, poor training of literacy practitioners and too few educational materials have meant ad hoc interventions with little supervision or follow-up. Poor planning is also due to lack of precise literacy figures. "We have to do the ground work where we want to intervene, to know the average literacy rate in a given village," says Amadou Alpha Bah, a TOSTAN education specialist. "We could save time if this were done by local authorities."

But things are changing. A ministry for literacy and the promotion of national languages was created in 1991. One of the thrusts of the ministry's policy is to decentralize operations and develop partnerships with non-governmental and community organization. To this end, a national committee was set up to enhance concertation, promote action-research, further the exchange of experiences to build capacity, and improve data collection. "There is currently a craze for literacy programmes in national languages," says Jacques Laberge of the Canadian embassy in Dakar. "In the past eighteen months, the ministry has taken things in hand, come up with an action plan and sought better coordination." In every region and department for example, a literacy adviser has been appointed to work with education inspectors.

The will to reduce illiteracy is one thing. Finding a programme that keeps adults motivated and prevents a relapse is another. Before starting the education programme, TOSTAN trainers recall visiting literacy classes in rural areas: "We would go to a class and there would be four or five people instead of the fifty registered. In one of the classes, a man was at the blackboard reading a long paragraph on how to write the letter 'G' and the other people were sitting there, a little sleepy. We went to another class and asked a woman who had been attending that class for five months whether she could read or write. She said, 'Well, you know, we spent a couple of months studying the difference between the short 'a' and the long 'a'. Meanwhile, one in every four children under 5 was dying in rural Senegal". Deborah Fredo, an education specialist from the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst who participated in developing TOSTAN' materials, explains that "before

TOSTAN, there were only literacy materials with phonetic-syllabic reader, and few actual reading material. The ministry produced newsletters in national languages but you could rarely find them in villages. Literacy teachers trained people with one book and then it was over."

### **The Seeds: Building on Tradition**

TOSTAN's roots go back to Melching's early years in Senegal, when she studied under the late Cheikh Anta Diop, a fervent believer in the development of national languages and the importance of indigenous African cultures. Since then, Melching and her collaborators have travelled the country with the spirit of ethnologists collecting songs, proverbs, legends and stories that are rich source of literacy materials.

Children were their first testing ground. In 1976, in collaboration with the Senegalese ministry of Culture, she and Bolle Mbaye, a dramatic arts graduate well-versed in African traditions, opened "*Demb ak Tey*" (Yesterday and Today), a centre to promote non-formal education in Wolof for Senegalese children by giving them access to books, theatre, puppetry, games and art activities based on their traditions. Located in the Medina, a crowded section of downtown Dakar, the centre became a favourite meeting spot for neighbourhood children who otherwise spent most of their time on the streets. At first, the children were given various new reading materials in Wolof. "We noticed that books at school were in French, which meant children not at school could only look at the pictures in them. We saw the children were very excited about reading," Bolle explained." So we devised a game. We cut out a lot of letters and drew pictures of day-today objects the children knew. They would use the letters to create the corresponding words which had been used in the books we had been reading with them. We found that after only a few weeks many children were reading small texts." With puppets modeled on traditional Senegalese dolls, children staged their own puppet shows performed in the neighbourhoods and later on Senegalese television.

The *Demb ak Tey* Centre expanded its activities by reaching out to thousand of other Senegalese children in a two-hour weekly radio programme in Wolof from 1978 to 1982. Named "*The Circle of Yesterday*

*and Today*", a reference to the way children once gathered round their grandmothers in a circle to hear songs, riddles, proverbs and stories, the programme focused on the activities and interests of children in rural Senegal. Like a caravan in ancient times, the programme's producers went from village to village collecting materials. "Suddenly, parents began working with children so that when the radio programme passed through, they would have good and interesting materials. It became a kind of competition between villages to see who would have the richest materials," Bolle and melching recall. The programme became very popular: the village children and even the adults could just about recite every play and story broadcast from the previous week. This prompted the producers to put more messages into the show about health, the environment and the importance of education. "We started doing plays on health and the environment, and songs on the importance of reading and writing." Children and adults listened regularly to the programme and used it as a forum for discussion in their villages.

### The Saam Njaay adventure

Encouraged by this, the *Demb ak Tey* Centre moved to Saam Njaay in 1982, a drought-stricken Sahelian village of 300 people located an hour from Dakar. Melching and Bolle's arrival in the village was auspicious: as the story goes, El Hadji Moustapha Njaay, the village chief who was 95 years old, had known 40 years earlier that an unusual woman could come to Saam Njaay because his father had dreamt of her arrival and the changes she would bring about in the village. What started as a three-month theatre project financed by the non-governmental organization ENDA-Tiers Monde turned into a two-year stay, during which a basic education programme was developed with villagers. The experiment was financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in conjunction with a project at the Senegalese national School of Applied Economics (ENEA).

"When Molly came", the village chief told a visitor, "the village women walked five miles a day to get water. Now they get water here. Before, we had no system for gardening and our people often went hungry in the dry season. Many of the village's babies died before the age of 2.

Now we have enough food for the dry season and a health hut that serves this and 18 other villages. The young men also used to get bored and restless and left the village to go into Dakar. Today they are here with us, deeply involved in village projects." Proof of that is the grinding mill, run by the women and now making a good profit. The dispensary is self-financing and the nursery garden, known for its production of eggplants, has prospered.

Saam Njaay is a symbol of the future TOSTAN basic education programme. First, because every innovation came after dialogue with villagers. "We spent a lot of time talking about what people did already, what their problems and needs, were," says Melching of her team's early days in Saam Njaay. "We talked about traditional farming and the kinds of events that were really important to them. Their first priority was to have access to water. Their second priority was to read and write. They wanted to learn how to write their names and correspond with their friends and relatives. They were very open and excited by our approach and our interest in them. We recorded everything and told them we would write it down, come back and say 'look: this is what you have said!'".

At first, villagers saw French as the language of progress. Since colonial days, mastery of reading and writing in French had been synonymous with paid employment or, more important, a job in the civil service in Dakar. The team pointed to the large number of unemployed, educated people in cities and considered the advantages of learning Wolof. "The villagers became increasingly excited to discover that in only a matter of months, they would be able to write letters, understand receipts and forms (for selling their millet and peanuts) and manage their own village projects," said Boole. They unanimously chose to begin classes in Wolof.

### A Meaningful Road to Literacy

Although the Tostan programme takes eighteen months, villagers learn basic reading and writing skills in four or five months. In Saam Njaay, most participants (men, women and children between 10 and 60), had never seen a text in Wolof. The first step was to motivated participants by writing down their names, their proverbs and stories, or their daily

activities, then reading these texts back to them. The villagers copied the texts in shaky but determined handwriting. The team only introduced the study of individual letters at a later time and then through use of an alphabet song using traditional rhythms which soon captivated the whole village. They toured the village with learners and identified familiar objects that resemble letters. The roofs of two huts became an "m". The round mats woven by women were perfect "o"s. The first lessons were in the backyard of a village compound. "We helped everyone practice writing circles and lines until they were used to holding a pencil. Then each participant chose a favourite word to learn. We gave each person his or her word and asked them to copy it several times," says Melching. "The artist on our team, Malick Pouye, drew pictures of the objects represented by the words. With these words we put together a basic village vocabulary to which we adapted traditional Wolof games to reinforce word recognition and spelling." Unlike most literacy projects in West Africa which stress letter repetition and syllable combination, this approach, influenced by the "whole language approach", emphasizes meaning, exposes participants to real texts from day one and encourages them to create texts. Because they are familiar with the text's content, reading comes more easily.

Within five months, many villagers had started to write. Some began taking notes at meetings and recording the births and deaths in registers. As they acquired literacy skills, they also gained confidence in their ability to change their living conditions.

At one literacy meeting on the environment, women talked about the long distances they had to walk to find firewood, although they knew of the dangers of deforestation. After visiting the nearby Forestry Department, a group of villagers wrote a play on this theme, featuring a child who meets the king of all trees in Senegal while looking for wood. He transports her to a magical country where every tree talks to her through a poem or song, explaining the importance of protecting and planting trees. Besides a performance in Wolof for the national 'Day of Trees' ceremony, the play was broadcast several times on national radio. An exhibition by the villagers was the basis for an education brochure published by the National forestry Department. As a result of this

mobilization, the villagers planted a small wood lot and built more than fifty clay and sand stoves in five nearby villages. Health issues, including malaria prevention and treatment, were also introduced into the literacy programme. Villagers elected a health committee and the head of each household gave FCFA 1,000 (US\$2) to buy medicines. The committee later secured funds to build a health hut.

The positive experiences in Saam Njaay, combined with visits to numerous literacy centres around the country, convinced the project's team to make its teaching methods available more systematically to larger numbers. A first attempt to organize materials into a modular system for an educational programme took place in 1987 in forty-two villages of the Kaolack region. In 1988, UNICEF/Senegal and the Minister of Social Development reviewed the Saam Njaay experience and the first draft of the basic education programme in Kaolack. Both parties were convinced that the hundreds of broken down millet machines, pumps, windmills and health huts in rural Senegal would still be working if villagers had been more involved and educated before project implementation. Between 1989 and 1992, upon request from the Senegalese government and with funding from UNICEF and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), TOSTAN further developed and tested its basic adult education programme.

### **Learning by Modules: A Progressive Approach**

TOSTAN has never abandoned the philosophy of education developed in Dakar when working with underprivileged children: "You never teach children anything; they learn because they want to learn. What you have to do is to stimulate them." In Saam Njaay, villagers were motivated when they found meaning through learning and understood why they were doing things. "We treat villagers as very intelligent adult learners", a TOSTAN co-ordinator, Sidy Cisse, explains. "All our educational materials are based on the idea that people have a vast store of knowledge which they have learned through different methods. They need to think about what they are doing and understand why they are doing it. They need to know why a new technique is being introduced, they need to analyse it and understand it, then decide with others if it's right for their community." The experience in Dakar and

Saan Njaay also proved that games, songs and theatre rooted in local traditions encouraged participation.

In the TOSTAN programme, learning how to read, write and do mathematics goes hand in hand with improving living standards. Since women are both the main care givers in the Senegalese family and the least educated group in society, the programme has been adapted to them. This involved rewriting and retesting the programme to take into account the fact that most village women have never been to school and are rarely exposed to letters and numbers. The "whole language approach," for example, is well-suited to this kind of situation since it starts with stories of relevant experiences rather than abstract letters that at first have no meaning. "Studies on the ways women learn stress values such as nurturing and interdependence. We emphasize people's need for one another, we try to show how people can work together, often citing traditional proverbs," said Ramata Dia of TOSTAN. "Women learn very quickly this way."

Journeying from the concrete to the abstract is used for teaching mathematics. Adapted from a method introduced at the Mauritanian Institute of National Languages, the approach emphasizes the notion of "base" as the foundation of all written and oral numeration. One of TOSTAN's education specialists, Amadou Alpha Bah, perfected the method, adapting it to the Senegalese environment and especially to women. Each maths lesson is tied to a practical skill and moves from the concrete (real objects) to the abstract (numbers).

The eighteen-month TOSTAN Basic Education programme, presented to participants as a path of discovery, comprises six learning modules, each covering twenty-four sessions and lasting two months. Each session lasts about two hours. Based on their work schedules, learners choose the days and times of classes. Classes usually meet three times a week, every other day, but during the rainy season, learners generally meet once or twice a week. Many classes create study groups to review new information outside class hours. In one evaluation, a majority of village women maintained that coming to class regularly, namely every other day, was essential to sustained learning because it gave them the time needed to assimilate new knowledge.

### The Backbone: Solving Problems

When, on two occasions, a young child in the village of Ker Simara crawled too close to his mother's cooking fire and was burned by a hot coal, women met to discuss how to prevent this kind of accident and find alternatives to dwindling supplies of firewood. After considering different solutions in the light of their resources, the women decided to build a clay stove in each household.

In Ker Sayib, the participants borrowed a room for their literacy classes. After two months, the landlord needed the room back. The women called a village meeting and discussed the problem as well as possible solutions based on their financial, material and human resources. They planned the solution together and built a centre with the help of other villagers.

These stories are classic examples of problem-solving in action, the theme of the programme's first module. As the teacher's guide to it explains, "To reach our goal of helping villagers become autonomous and independent, we start our programme by learning problem-solving techniques. The simplicity of the process followed in this module makes it easy to apply in the situations participants face in their daily lives. As in all sessions of the programme, our aim is not to tell participants what they should be thinking, but to introduce skills that will help them find their own adapted and creative solutions. Pictures, teaching games and stories help to make sessions lively and stimulating."

The problem-solving process has five steps:

- 1) identifying and analysing the problem;
- 2) studying adapted solutions, based on available financial, material and human resources as well as the time factor;
- 3) planning the solution: What needs to be accomplished? When do the step have to be completed? Who is responsible? What human, material and financial resources are necessary? What are the possible obstacles?

- 4) implementing the solution;
- 5) evaluating the results: did we solve the problem?

Each stage is symbolized by a distinct hand gesture and analysed with stories and case studies. Through drawings showing a village where illness is rife, the mill grinder is broken down and women have no wood to cook, learners have to identify problems, and draw up a rural development proposal by going through the steps above.

Literacy learning is made part of this process. By hearing and seeing words and sentences rather than isolated letters, learners understand that the goal of reading and writing is to understand and communicate. A sentence with a meaning is easier to grasp than a letter in isolation. In the first session, participants learn to match words with drawings. Every word studied is written on a card and stored in a "word box" for regular revision. Participants also immediately learn to recognize and write their own names and the name of their village and country, an extremely motivating exercise. As the problem-solving process is explained, key words are written on the board and read by several participants. "In this way, participants feel it is important to read and write so as to strengthen their knowledge of the problems," said Amadou Alpha Bah. "One reinforces the other." Learners get a pre-literacy book to practice reading and writing. By the end of this first module, they are able to write the numbers 0-9, read and write their names, their village name, and with help from their facilitator, short texts such as letters.

During this stage, the teacher is encouraged to create a literate environment; in most villages using the TOSTAN programme, there are signs identifying houses, trees, the health hut or the well. Participants are asked to study the words and try to copy them in their books.

### **Development in Action: From Health to Management**

The problem-solving skills introduced in module 1 are used throughout the programme's five following modules, which deal with more specific issues.

### *Hygiene Activities.*

In module 2, participants learn technical information about the transmission of germs and the benefits of good personal and village hygiene. Putting the problem-solving process into action, small groups from the class form research teams to identify and analyse the major health and hygiene problems in their environment. At the same time, they learn to read and write text and words related to this experience and begin the study of syllables and letters. In a 1991 evaluation, 83 per cent of the participants asked felt that the activities had been sustained and reported that clean ups had been organized in most villages once a week.

For this module, participants get a reading book which they use through module 4 and an illustrated health booklet on transmission of germs. In math, they learn addition, subtraction and numbers from 10 to 100. They also learn how to use the calendar and tell the time.

### *Use of the Oral Dehydration Therapy and Vaccinations.*

Module 3 introduces health information on two major causes of death in children under 5: dehydration and illnesses resulting from lack of immunization. This stage also involves questioning traditional practices, such as using sometimes harmful cures prescribed by the local healer or the widespread belief that vaccinations can lead to paralysis in children or cause miscarriages.

TOSTAN developed a colourful flip chart to present the oral dehydration solution (ORS) which prevents dehydration from diarrhoea. Yabata Njaay, a village health agent from Saam Njaay who helped on the conception of this material explains: "Often people in Dakar don't understand that villagers don't want to be told what to do; they want to understand why they should be doing something. We wanted to know what diarrhoea is and why we should continue to use ORS even if it doesn't immediately stop the diarrhoea. The day I learned about this, I threw away the pills I had been selling and started using the ORS solution in our village health hut". As part of the flipchart presentation, the facilitator shows how to prepare ORS and invites participants to practise, stressing the need to wash hands and utensils before preparation.

In the next session, participants play the oral dehydration card game, a set of fifty drawing showing positive and negative hygiene habits, and the elements for making ORS. Learners start with seven cards and try to get four good hygiene cards and the three ORS cards to win. In the process, they throw away the "bad" cards, explaining how bad habits can lead to diarrhoea and dehydration. Next, participants get a small book summarizing what they have learned. They are familiar with the information so it is easier to read. In a further lesson, learners plan how to put their new knowledge into practice. In some villages women organized a health group to advise mothers whose children had diarrhoea, making certain the essential ingredients and utensils were always at hand. At the final session on ORS, participants learn how to present the flip chart, practicing in small groups. As a result it is common to see women presenting the chart to members of their family, to neighbourhood organizations or even in nearby villages.

In an evaluation covering nineteen villages, 83 per cent of the participants interviewed did not know how to prepare the ORS before the programme. At the end of it, all the women say they had used the solution each time their children had diarrhoea. Similarly, only one-third of the participants said they had vaccinated their children before the education programme. After module 3, most claimed that children and pregnant women in the village were systematically vaccinated at the right time. Agents at local health posts confirmed that the women now arrive knowing which immunizations are necessary, the names and dates of the vaccinations and which illnesses they prevent.

#### *Financial and Material Management*

Module 4 teaches basic financial and material management for all types of village projects. Helping villagers to effectively manage their projects is one of the most important features of the TOSTAN programme. In module 4, participants learn about management and good bookkeeping. They study the information needed on a daily, monthly and yearly basis to assure that the money and materials invested in the project are well utilized. The many concrete examples presented throughout the module allow participants to practise using their new skills. The module is

introduced when learners have already assimilated the maths and literacy notions needed to do bookkeeping. Multiplication skills are also introduced.

### *Management of Human Resources*

By exploring notions of leadership and group dynamics, module 5 “prepares the ground for democracy” says Falilou Cisse, a Tostan trainer. Through lively case studies related to their own experiences, learners discuss traditional forms of leadership - for instance, the custom of the eldest man in the village being chief - and ways to bring about change. They learn how to set priorities and delegate. This has emboldened women, giving them confidence to speak out in front of men. Whether it be the village chief, the president of a village group or the leader of an association, participants interviewed after this module said they use its contents on a daily basis and felt they now had a better understanding of themselves and others. In many villages women are in charge of treasuries and committees have been set up to manage collective funds. In ker Sembara, villagers are speaking about electing their village chief. In another village women are now included in the circle of elders when development activities are discussed with important visitors. As for literacy, learners produce various text, including letters newspaper articles, poetry and short stories. During a “writers’ workshop every two weeks, they share their work with other villagers. The process also strengthens grammar, spelling and punctuation. In math, participants learn to divide.

### *Feasibility Study and Income-generation Projects*

Module 6 helps villagers make decisions about choosing income-generating projects. Using games, flip charts and plays, participants understand the need for a feasibility study before stating a project. In many village, women participants have since stated small profitable activities and can manage the projects themselves. In Medina Cherif, a village in the Kolda region, for example, the women’s group started a doughnut-making project with FCFA 6,000 (US\$12) after a feasibility study. In four months time they had saving of FCFA 40,000 (US\$80).

In an evaluation in the Kolda region, where the TOSTAN programme was completed in 1992, about 90 per cent of participants reported they had used their management skills since finishing modules 4,5 and 6. Participants with small businesses said they now keep financial records, and calculate profits and losses. They also appreciated learning management on a daily, monthly and yearly basis.

At the end of each module, learners take short, ungraded test to see if the set aims for their work with the facilitator and trainer are "achieved", "in progress", or "not achieved".

### Training: Intensive Practice

TOSTAN prefers the term "facilitator" to teacher, reflecting its two-way approach to learning: classes open the minds of participants to new ways of managing their lives, facilitators are guides on this path. Facilitators are expected to have at least four years of primary schooling, or be literate in national languages. They should come from the same village as their future students, and be prepared to stay there during the week for the programme's 18-month duration. The job profile calls for candidates to be "patient, tolerant, respectful of others, competent and devoted to learning". In practice, however, some facilitators have no education at all and often come from neighbouring villages if no one can be found in programme villages.

The low educational level of most facilitators convinced TOSTAN that one of the keys to a successful programme was very practical and comprehensive teaching materials. One of the reasons the Mauritanian experience of math teaching only partly succeeded was due to a lack of training and session guides for teachers. Most teachers were unfamiliar with the process and simply reverted to methods they had learned in French schools. The result of this in Senegal is a training programme "that is one of the most interesting and *avant-garde* in West Africa" according to a 1992 evaluation report.

Training starts off with a one-month session to understand TOSTAN's approaches and study the first module. Facilitators then have ten days of training before each new module. "In the whole programme,

- we emphasize processes," says Melching. "The facilitators have to study what the goals of education are and what TOSTAN's role is in all this. They learn that use of theatre, songs, games and poems is very close to traditional education."

Training lasts six to seven hours every day: "It is very intense," explains Deborah Fredo of the Center for International Education. "The facilitators are continual learners; they improve their own writing during the course. They have to get up and present a session, based on a lesson plan. They have to prepare each session and are criticized by other facilitators. You see them working every night. By the end of the training, they are ready to go."

During the course, facilitators have to assess students' progress by filling out a form every month and evaluation tables at the end of each module. Less formally, TOSTAN asks facilitators to give their impressions of learners' progress and to encourage group discussions on the impact the programme has had on the lives of participants..

Facilitators are helped along by their trainer, who visits classes regularly. One trainer normally covers ten to thirteen villages close to one another. He or she helps village facilitators review the coming week's sessions and makes sure there are no major problems. The trainer also works closely with development agents and local authorities to coordinate class subjects and project activities. Trainers earn about FCFA 130,000 (US P\$260) per month (the minimum wage in Senegal is FCFA 40,000 or US \$80). Facilitators get an honorarium of FCFA 25,000 (US \$50) per month for teaching two classes with thirty participants each. This money is paid by the Village Education Committee elected in each community to be responsible for all activities of the programme.

The initial problem of finding qualified facilitators, particularly women, is slowly being overcome by recruiting TOSTAN graduates, such as Seexu Ndiaye, once an illiterate farmer, who followed TOSTAN's course and became a facilitator, then a trainer. The programme hopes to increase the number of female facilitators by recruiting from these graduates. Currently, about 55 per cent of facilitators are women.

## From Experimentation to Extension

From January 1989 to December 1992, the TOSTAN basic education programme operated in nineteen villages in the Kolda region of Senegal. The entire programme from module 1 through 6 was implemented despite an interruption due to lack of funds. The Kolda experiment was designed to allow a final revision of the six modules and serve as a teaching and logistical lab for TOSTAN trainers.

In 1991, the programme was extended to fifty-five villages and several non-governmental organizations. With government cooperation, UNICEF targeted villages which had water and a rural development programme. In practice, the choice was more arbitrary. In five villages, famine and drought forced the centres to close. "Politics won over in some cases," according to Alain Dunberry, a consultant for CIDA. "It is considered a great privilege for a village to have a literacy programme. Demand for them is greater than supply."

When basic education is made part of a development project, such as the UNICEF-inspired "Bamako Initiative" to improve basic health services in rural areas, TOSTAN starts off by approaching the people in charge of these programmes. "Those who run development activities in villages often have no formal education. We tell them about the importance of linking education to development to make their actions more successful," explains Amadou Alpha Bah. A committee in each village decides who will participate in the programme and where to hold classes.

Separate classes for men and women are generally started, each with thirty students. Melching justifies this by women's initial lack of confidence: "In one class of fourteen women and two men", she recalls, "the men still did all the talking!". In most villages, however, men are quite supportive. They also see that change is beneficial to the whole family. At the end of two modules, "women have totally changed; they express their feelings without fear and are able to stand up in front of a group, organize and find strategies for action."

Collaboration with village authorities has a mixed track record. "Authorities often want to control the organization's actions rather than

support them, but there are exceptions," says Amadu Alpha Bah, pointing to several prefects who have shown genuine interest in community mobilization. "It makes a real difference when a local authority visits a classroom. It is very important to participants". In Taiba Njaay, an important religious leader volunteered to become a facilitator. He is a strong advocate of education in national languages and has been influential in underlining how education and better health contribute to better religious practice. In some areas, the record has been more ambivalent; in one, the prefect wanted to stop classes, claiming he had not been properly informed about them. Duberry takes instances of poor cooperation one step further, underlining the importance of properly training government officials to manage and evaluate education programmes.

If the attitude of authorities towards the programme has varied, participants have not always been keen on contributing financially to the project. "The idea of villagers paying facilitators turned out to be unrealistic," writes Chantal Ouellet, a non-formal education specialist from the Canadian Centre for Research and International Cooperation, in her report. "Project organizers and trainers had to spend a lot of time sensitizing groups before villagers were prepared to pay facilitators. It eventually worked, but not without difficulty." Villagers are more ready to build classrooms and buy materials than pay a facilitator, "We feel it is only where communities have fairly substantial revenues and villagers are extremely motivated through awareness-raising work that the village development organization, and not individuals, can take responsibility for the facilitator."

One of the reasons UNICEF decided to continue funding the TOSTAN programme in the same regions for several years was precisely to tap into a fund of goodwill towards the course. UNICEF feels the programme has created a sensitivity in these areas, and that people are now convinced by non-formal education. Proof of its impact is that over 100 villages have asked for the programme and all have already contributed money to participate.

### **Evaluations: A Lasting Impact**

One of the innovative aspects of the TOSTAN education programme is the emphasis placed on internal evaluation. These evaluations have

allowed TOSTAN to continually improve pedagogical materials and training based on first-hand information. Chantal Ouellet, consultant for the Canadian Center for Research and International Cooperation, set up the system and trained Ousmane Djimera, Senegalese education specialist, to continue after her departure.

The staying power of knowledge acquired in the TOSTAN programme is one of the highlights of several evaluations. The themes of each module were found relevant to local needs and many people changed their habits, especially in health and management.

An evaluation done at the end of the experimental phase (1989-1992) reported a dropout rate of 12 per cent, well below that usually encountered in many other literacy programmes. "The results confirm that important changes have occurred in the lives of participants after the TOSTAN-UNICEF programme: besides knowing how to read, write and do math in their mother tongue, many aspects of their lives, including health, hygiene, individual and group finances, the environment, project management, etc. have considerably improved. Participants have taken numerous initiatives which show they are on the way to becoming autonomous and self-sufficient," the report said.

A 1992 evaluation by CIDA echoed these findings and praised the major participation of women in the course. "TOSTAN's results prove that a well-structured approach, linking basic education concerns with literacy and giving enough importance to training can yield promising results. It also has to be sufficiently spread out in time. There is an obvious need for literacy and basic education, and the motivation is there. It is nevertheless necessary to provide sufficient resources to adequately meet these needs."

### **Funding: A Critical Issue**

It is hard to estimate the cost of developing the TOSTAN Basic Education programme, as it has been an ongoing process over the past fifteen years. Although no exhaustive evaluation exists to this day of TOSTAN's real costs, the following items are always taken into account when estimating the programme's cost at a given time and region:

- equipment and materials for each village centre,
- cost of ninety days training for village facilitators over two years,
- seventeen books for village facilitators and eleven for village participants,
- one experienced trainer for ten villages,
- honorarium to village facilitators, either paid by the project or by the village organization,
- transport for the trainer. Costs can be substantially cut if the ten villages covered by a trainer are close enough so that he or she can walk or use a bicycle.

The average eighteen-month to two-year project covering ten villages and 600 participants costs about US\$40 per year and participant. Although this is much less than the cost of educating a child for one year in the formal system, some donor agencies argue that TOSTAN's programme is too expensive compared with other, shorter literacy courses that require less training and books.

To these arguments TOSTAN and UNICEF answer that a good educational programme requires adequate initial investments. One personnel is trained and books start being printed in larger quantities, costs gradually drop as the programme goes to scale. TOSTAN's account show that this is clearly starting to happen. The programme's initial costs not only included the materials in villages, but also training people to understand and work with participatory methods.

While UNICEF admits that the experimental phase from 1989-1991 went over budget due to its length, the cost of the programme has now fallen as materials for learners and facilitators have been tested and finalized. Administrative cost have also been cut. Suppliers and printers have been chosen on bids through a systematic and rational approach at all levels.

For the moment, TOSTAN's survival is tied to UNICEF's support. "We are under UNICEF's banner and only intervene where they want us

to, but we have a very large demand from the non-formal sector, including associations in villages and big city suburbs producer groups and craftsmen," says Amadou Alpha Bah. In practice though, TOSTAN now recognized the need to seek alternative source of financing.

### Lessons: Going Beyond Literacy

TOSTAN learners might be able to master basic reading and writing skills after five months, but part of their achievement is rooted in a method that took about fifteen years to develop and required considerable patience, curiosity, openness and dedication. It has turned into a solid programme that gives people firm foundations to improve their lives.

The programme was born out of a fruitful encounter between one individual, dedicated African educators, a country and the belief that culture could be rich educational ally. "The method puts traditional civilization before a scientific mirror", says Alphonse Tay of UNESCO. The light cast by science on traditions leads to a critical examination of reality. Some traditions, such as leadership concepts, are modernized; others, including attitudes toward health and medicine, are demystified, while art forms, from dance to music and theatre, are powerful ways to transmit educational messages.

TOSTAN's programme is founded on the assumption that learning sinks in when people truly understand the how and why of things. Too often, development projects have given women technical tools without enough attention to the need for management skills. "Women have been the ones who have suffered. Often they aren't prepared to manage a millet machine so they feel like failures and are blamed," says Melching. "When you are not prepared, you are going to fail." In many TOSTAN villages, women have succeeded in pooling savings and running successful income-generating projects.

Several keys to TOSTAN's success emerge from studies and from conversations with individuals:

- The participation of learners in devising the programme's centers: all materials were designed through testing, dialogue and feedback. Although

this required higher investment in the early stages than is the case for most literacy programme, it has yielded impressive results and is comprehensive enough to be used in different environments. Proof is the success reported by more than twenty non-governmental organisations in tying TOSTAN's basic education programme to their own rural development projects.

- A comprehensive basic education programme strikes a deeper chord in people's lives than a straight forward literacy project. The objectives are clearly presented to learners before each module, providing a sense of direction. Understanding how each module will contribute to changing their lives and environment is a powerful motivating factor for learners. Throughout the TOSTAN course, participants learn to read, write and do math at the same time as they are introduced to the problem-solving process and to ways to improve health, hygiene and living standards in their community. Combining the goals of conventional literacy programmes with those of consciousness-raising and transformation is one of the TOSTAN's most innovative aspect.
- Striking the right balance between the structure and flexibility means the programme can be used in different contexts. The problem-solving process, which is the basis of the TOSTAN programme, is presented in detail and can be adapted to villages according to their needs.
- The availability of the materials is another attractive selling point; "There are new books for every module", says Amadou Alpha Bah. "It is a very powerful motive for participants. In many other literacy there is too much routine and people get bored."
- Learning in national languages makes literacy more accessible and more effective. Evaluations cite the pride felt by learners about reading and writing in their mother tongue. Because values attached to local cultures are integrated into the modules, learners encounter words that have an emotional impact on them. TOSTAN graduates interviewed for one evaluation wanted their children to enroll in a national language programme.
- Training materials for facilitators; people with minimal education can become good teachers if they have the chance to improve their skills

regularly and feel they are getting guidance. TOSTAN's training between each module, along with its detail session guides for facilitators, are keys to programme's success. Some non-governmental organizations have bought more than five hundred copies of each book to use in their programmes. In the Gambia, the TOSTAN math session were adapted by the Curriculum Development Department for primary school use.

- The participatory approach spreads the educational message beyond the class. The module system encourages the class and the community at large to tackle problems. A common vocabulary builds up in the village about development. Proof lies in the frequency with which learners go to the neighbouring village to present the oral dehydration flip chart, for example. Today, after following the programme, adolescents can discuss some of its aspects with their parents, putting the family on the same level of awareness.
- Donors are more prepared to fund projects that result from a careful feasibility study and are run by people who have mastered literacy skills through a basic education programme attuned to local conditions. Many proposals by villagers have been financed by self-help funds and non-governmental organizations. The latter have been encouraged by the involvement of the population in identifying their problems, and successfully conceiving and seeing through a project to improve their lives.
- Local support and motivation of facilitators and trainers are key factors in the programme's quality and success. When the programmes receive backing from the village chief and the presidents of the village groups, it is all the more effective. Lack of coordination and the choice of certain villages for political reason lessened the programme's impact in some areas. In addition, the ability of the facilitator and trainer to be responsive to problems at the local level also has a positive impact on the participants.
- Determining class hours according to learners' work schedules is another key to the programme's success. One evaluation showed that heavy work loads at certain periods of the year, rather than a lack of interest in the programme, were the main reason for which participants, especially missed classes.

- A common vision; visitors and evaluators of the project are unanimous about the dedication, expertise and openness and openness of TOSTAN's staff.

### **The Adolescent Programme: A Two-track Approach to Illiteracy**

In 1993, the Directing Pilot Committee for the Basic Education Programme (with representatives from the Ministry of Literacy and the Promotion of National languages; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Women, the Family and Children; the Ministry of Social Action; UNICEF; TOSTAN; other NGOs; and UNESCO) expressed their interest to use the TOSTAN approach and methodologies to reach out-of-school children.

The adolescents learn to read, write, do math, solve problems, and in general, develop their problem-solving skills and creativity. They also participate in sessions on health and hygiene, nutrition, family management, children's rights, history, geography, educations for peace, leadership skills and group dynamics. Although the adult programme was closely followed, new information on different health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases, malaria and first aid were added, as well as new session on civic education and pre-professional skills.

Through stories, drama and games, the programme has also raised the issue of the girl child and the specific problems she encounters in Senegal. Many of the sessions have action objectives so that the children can put into practice what they are learning and discussing in the classroom. One day every week is devoted to physical education (sports, traditional games, dance).

One of the major lessons learned from the adult programme was that the participants need much practice in writing real texts. Thus, with help of the facilitator, children create and produce their own text once a week. TOSTAN chose topics for the texts that are related to children's rights because the adolescents always have a great deal to say about these issues that are directly connected to their everyday experiences. The text they write is then used to teach and analyze both the structure and content of the language. An example of a text written in Wolof by

one group of girls from the village of Ker Moor Njaay, related to the right to equality among sexes, reads:

*I am the only girl child in my family. I was all the clothes in the house. I look for wood each day and do the cooking for the compound. I fetch water from the well and do the cleaning. I sweep the house and the courtyard.*

*Why do I do all this work? Because I am the girl child. I work from morning to night and when I lie down at night, I often cannot sleep because I'm so exhausted. And so I think and think and think. I feel so sad and sometimes cry, because I do not know when all this suffering will end.*

The children are also presented with texts from their reading book which are written by an outside author. These answer such questions as: What is the biggest animal in the world? Why is there salt in the ocean? What are stars? Why do lions roar? How does a spider trap other insects? What is the biggest desert and longest river in the world? etc. These texts are short, amusing and well written so that the children enjoy sharing them with their parents, friends, brothers, fathers and sisters.

Using similar vocabulary and methodologies for the adult and adolescent programme has allowed the parents to actively participate in the education of their children for the first time. According to one villager, a child who goes through the educational system in the French language is often unable to readapt to the village household. The child feels he is "better" than other members of the family and certainly "different". This head of family explained that in his house, everyone now studies together and even uses the problem-solving process during family meetings. Indeed, feedback from villagers shows that communication between the generations has been greatly facilitated.

Most of the children have already built adapted wood stoves as part of the first module to help put in practice their problem-solving abilities (lack of firewood). The older children were trained by a TOSTAN facilitator who went from village to village and these children are now training others to continue building the stoves. Some have even begun small projects with their new skills.

There are few absences in the adolescent programme and high motivation among the participants. Some of the children have made since the beginning of the programme reflect their excitement and enthusiasm as well as a real hope for the future possibilities of such a programme:

*"I was surprised that our teacher never hits us! She listens to our ideas and we are not afraid to say what we think."*

*"I can already read and write my own name and the name of my village and country. Soon I will be able to read stories and write my own. I want to be a journalist in national languages."*

*"I didn't have a way of protecting my books for Module 1, so I used the problem-solving process and, with local materials, made myself a school bag."*

*"In many surrounding villages, our friends have not been as lucky as we to have this programme. When I finish, I want to teach children in other villages."*

*"I have learned so many things and can share them at night with my mother and father. They correct my math and reading and are very proud to be able to help me be a good student. I now feel I will be able to make my community a better place to live!"*

## The Future

The future of Senegal, a country without mineral resources and whose capital city will create fewer and fewer productive jobs, continues to be in rural development, especially agriculture. If the city continues to remain more attractive than the countryside, it is utopian to believe farmers will stop migrating there. We must restore confidence to the rural world. This requires a new distribution of power, with more decisions made by farmers who would be free to choose their own forms of organization." Written in 1981 by the French agronomist Rene Dumont, these words have lost none of their relevance. Part of TOSTAN's strength is the confidence it has given the rural world, by valuing its culture and language, and by giving men and women the tools with which to shape

their lives: People will stay in their communities when they have enough income, can take initiatives and see how knowledge - such as better health practices - can lead to change. Evidence of change is obvious in a majority of villages where TOSTAN has worked: health committees have been set up, adapted wood stoves are used, small wood lots have been planted, women manage the millet machines and children comment proudly that their mothers know how to read and write.

The availability of a comprehensive programme that offers participants problem-solving tools and deals with the crucial problems of health, hygiene and the environment is an asset for many regions of Africa faced with high illiteracy rates, especially among women. More focus needs to be put on implementing these well-studied and tested programmes rather than developing new ones. At the same time, more efforts must be made to increase the number of government agents trained in national languages in the literacy field. TOSTAN's close relationship to the Ministry of Education ensures a rich exchange of experiences and pedagogical techniques in the next few years, in both the formal and the nonformal sectors. Responding to the demand for basic education programmes in national languages, TOSTAN hopes to adapt its course into other languages by 1997 and eventually set up a training centre for the West Africa Region.

By giving adults and adolescents an exciting learning alternative, TOSTAN is attacking rural poverty. "Poverty is a vice that can reach the imagination and become addictive, taking away the individual's capacity to even imagine solutions," says Alphonse Tay of UNESCO. TOSTAN has shown that individuals without any formal education, from villages with minimal resources, can improve their lives and environment through a solid programme leading to greater autonomy and self-sufficiency.

# 6

## SKILLED-BASED LITERACY PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN

### Introduction

Qi Yiling comes from a village in Xuan Wei County, hidden amongst the steep rocks and hills of the mountain province of Yunnan in China. Life here is not easy for anyone, particularly for women. They day is one long cycle of cooking, cleaning and washing, not to mention the hand work in the fields. There is never a moment to rest, never a moment to complain. This is a woman's life in the province of Yunnan.

Like most women in her village, Qi Yiling is completely illiterate. Recently, she had to collect her daughter from hospital. She got off the bus in the main market square but in her panic forgot to mark the tyres of the bus to take her home. Later when she returned with her sick daughter strapped to her back, she went round and round the bus station incapable for reading the signs or finding her bus. She didn't know where to go. She went left and right, too humiliated to ask anyone.

At home, in her village, Qi Yiling faces similar problems and doesn't do much better. She is constantly battling with the family, trying to keep everything going. Her husband doesn't understand or appreciate her feelings. When things go wrong, it is always her fault. Qi Yiling sometimes asks herself whether all this is worth it, why she doesn't just lie down and die. But Qi Yiling and thousands of other women like her, living in the remote mountain villages of Yunnan, need not feel as isolated as before. The All China Women's Federation, The Yunnan Education

Commission, UNESCO, UNDP and the Ford Foundation have joined forces to improve life for the women of the region by forming a project called the Xuan Wei Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women. It teaches literacy but also encourages women to take control of their lives and income. Qi Yiling, for example, received intensive training in tree grafting skills, something she never dreamed possible as the villagers believed that trees grafted by women never gave fruit. Last year's bumper harvest did much to dispel the myth that women bring bad luck.

There are many other women like Qi Yiling who have been able to increase their income and self-reliance. Shen Yidan, for instance, has managed to raise pigs. Through the project she learnt how to select healthy piglets, nurture them and give them the right feed. Women like Qi Yiling and Shen Yidan now lead a different and more fulfilling life. Their confidence in their strength and intelligence has increased. This important improvement in both living standards and self-reliance could not have come about without special measures and local will. The balance of power between men and women is slowly changing.

#### **Women's Status in China: Beginnings of the Programme**

**"In the former days of China, most women had no formal names before marriage. They adopted their husband's names after they were wed. Children used their father's name"**

*(The Situation of Chinese Women, All China Women's Federation, ACWF, 1994)*

According to the recent *Study of Portrayal of Men and Women in Chinese School Textbooks and Children's Literature* carried out by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and UNESCO, China's past feudal system has weighed heavily on women's conditions and status. Even as early as 1925, Chairman Mao Zedong noted the secondary status of Chinese women when he wrote in his *Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in China*, that a Chinese man is dominated by three systems of authority, the State, the clan system and the supernatural. Chinese women, however, Mao said, are strangled by a fourth "thick rope"-men.

Common saying and superstitions denigrating women abound throughout the world. The province of Yunnan has its own which go a long way in explaining the battle women have had to lead to assert their rights and gain access to education. The Dai community in southern Yunnan, for example, compares women to crabmeat, inferior even to mutton. If a Dai Fisherman accidentally touches a woman's sarong (skirt), he is, according to popular belief, haunted by witches and demons. The Sani people bar women from building houses as they believe a house built by a woman will collapse. The Han even have an old saying that "women and inferior men (slaves) are hard to get along with".

As women's emancipation was intimately related to the national liberation movement and the socialist revolution, it is considered an inseparable part of the ethics of New China. The law stipulates that women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, social and family life and by comparison to their sisters in other countries, Chinese women have made great strides. Thanks to political will and the relentless efforts of the All China Women's Federation, Chinese women are no longer, in general household servants.

Great achievements, in terms of education, have been made and the momentum is being kept up. According to statistics, since 1987, women's illiteracy rate has dropped to thirty-eight per cent and since 1986, 150 million people have attended training sessions in various practical technical skills, and half of these trainees were women. As a result, women's technical qualities and skills have been remarkably enhanced. Education has enabled farmers to be aware of the strength of women's work. Traditional models of division of labour with the man in charge have changed. A great number of women have started up businesses or became industrial workers and rural women are now important contributors to family income. Women now hold leading positions. There are women members in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Chairwomen of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. There are women ministers and women at governor and municipal level.

Although such remarkable achievements have been made in women's education in China, a number of problems and difficulties

remain, particularly in remote and rural regions. There has been an inadequate balance in the spread of women's education and although education has been carried to most provincial prefectures, in many rural areas women's education is out of date and women's status, in both family and society, still apparently, lower than men's. Old traditional values have impeded progress. In rural areas, the ideology of "respect men, look down on women" can still dominate. For instance many poor farmers keep their daughters at home to manage the housework and the enrolment rate for girls is four per cent lower than that of boys. Of those children who do not enrol in school, eighty-three per cent are girls and they also make up seventy per cent of all the drop-outs from primary school.

Education personnel, funds, and material resources are, at times, inadequate and rural schools for adult education cannot cope with the scale of the task. There are not enough county, township or village technical schools for farmers. Less than ten per cent of adults in rural areas participate in cultural and technical education. In addition, a lot of schools are short of the necessary teaching instruments and equipment for modern teaching and literacy programmes for women. Furthermore, there is a need for systematically trained personnel to be in charge of both management and teaching. (The Report of the Regional Planning Meeting for the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women, UNESCO/PROAP 1990). Many experts in women's rights and adult educators believe that once women's earning capacity is strengthened, their status in society will automatically increase. Wang Rongxue, the project director for the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women in Xuan Wei, gives the example of a woman from the Dali prefecture who started raising quails. Her status and standing began to rise with her income. It was not just a case of having greater earnings but the fact that she had the power to decide, the power to spend her money. In the past men dictated how the money was to be spent. According to the All China Women's Federation (ACWF), many couples now share in the decision-making process when it comes to money and other important family matters such as children's schooling.

This change is essential to the concept of empowerment that is central to the All China Women's Federation and the UNESCO-UNDP

**Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women.** Both stress the idea of the "four selves" which are the four fundamental prerequisites for progress. These are self-reliance, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-improvement.

### Across Asia

The Xuan Wei project is part of a larger regional project: RAS/88/013 Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women. Initiated in 1989 and implemented in 1990 with seed money of some one million U.S. Dollars from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this regional project was designed to strengthen national capacity in preparing learning programmes which would equip women, of all ages, with knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate fully and meaningfully in national development. It was launched in seven countries in Asia and the Pacific - Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Union of Myanmar and Viet Nam. Within the vast framework of the project each participating country prepared an action plan for its respective select sites. In China, work began with a seminar hosted by the Yunnan Education Commission and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO.

After the first regional training workshop and seminar, each country conducted five workshops of their own. The training programme concentrated on the theme of promoting women's status in society through enhancing knowledge, skills and attitudes. Methods of changing mentalities to lighten domestic burdens and demonstrate women's importance in production were set out and some twenty-nine booklets were developed as reading material. The units were written in accordance with the needs of the identified target group of women. Relevance to the lives of the learners was considered to be one of the most important elements.

All the training followed certain guidelines and a curriculum, which have come to be known as the "*Educate to Empower*" approach. Indeed the culmination of all the preparatory work and the regional and national training was publication of a manual entitled "*Educate to Empower*". In many ways this text retraces the steps of the Skills-based Literacy

Programme for Women. It spells out the whole basis of the programme and has been essential in disseminating the programme which is now being replicated in the South Asian region (the ESCAP project on functional literacy for female youth is carrying the project to Malaysia and Pakistan). So far "*Educate to Empower*" has been translated into eleven languages including Dzibgka (Bhutan), Bahasa Melayu (Malaysia), Bangla (Bangladesh), Burmese, Chinese, Lao Tok Pisin and Motu (Papua New Guinea), Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese. The manuals in each respective language were used to guide further in-country training. As a result subsequent workshops were able to concentrate on how to provide supplementary reading materials and curricular units. Some 700 pieces of learning material were then developed in the various languages of the participating countries.

The UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP) was responsible for regional project execution and for facilitating inter country co-operation. It also served as an advisory body and provided technical support for the countries when necessary. A team was then set up in each country for carrying out the various activities outlined in the individual country plan.

### National Problems, Local Solutions

**"The economy of our country will approach the level of developed countries by its 100th anniversary. One of the reasons we say so is that we possess the power to develop education, to increase the scientific and technological manpower at all levels in time before the 2040's. Our country, its power and the potential of economic development depend increasingly on the quality of labour and the quantity and quality of the intellectuals."** (*Deng Xiaoping, 1985*)

This promise of progress by Deng Xiaoping has since modelled and structure the Chinese approach to both education and production. Education, as is obvious from the Xuan Wei experience, has to be led towards greater productivity and needs to meet the demands of the economy.

The Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women is, in fact, a unique mirroring of the country's needs and its educational goals. For many years, as Xu, Zheng, Little and Lewin note in *Educational Innovation in China* "rural school graduates... lacked knowledge of production and were unable to adapt themselves to the needs of the market economy. They had passed the examination of chemistry and physics but did not know the nature and uses of pesticides and agricultural machinery". When the Skills-based literacy Programme for Women was established in Xuan Wei county, it was precisely to remedy this kind of situation and to focus on the problems of rural women with little or no education.

Deng Xiaoping's 1985 introduction of the Responsibility System had also brought about dramatic shifts in agricultural practices and changes in the system of ownership. More and More farmers owned little plots of land yet the demand was for greater productivity and a great deal of farmland was being "eaten up" by industrialization. Small plots of land have to produce great quantities of food, so education and training are the only means to help establish agro-technology and help Xuan Wei maintain its self-reliance in food.

Xuan Wei county is a border area in the Yunnan Province of southwest China. The land is rugged and communication difficult, great distances separate one village from another. The province has some twenty-five minority groups and the existence of so many different ethnic groups over the centuries has led to a rich local culture where the acceptance of others features strongly. Only ten per cent of the land in Yunnan is arable and it requires a great amount of work but since ancient times terraced fields have been built into the mountains. The fields mould into the mountain landscape perfectly and are a typical example of humankind's adaptation to the demands of the land. Xuan Wei County is known throughout China for its ham production and the growing of maize and potatoes.

Here women are generally burdened with fourteen to eighteen hours work a day. This over-work and the multiplicity of tasks can lead to sickness and chronic health conditions. Women's opportunities are much

more limited than men's, particularly in education and technical agricultural training. Young women may suffer from the ill effects of early marriage and not have the chance to develop their potential. An initial survey in the area noted that women played a very small role in decision-making and family business. The Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women was seen as instrumental in raising awareness. Women and girls seemed quite unaware of the power they could hold if they were to become active income earners. The benefits they could draw from literacy and training had, up till then, appeared almost irrelevant. This was particularly the case amongst women who lacked basic production skills and who had no chance of improving them - most of these women were illiterate. They didn't know how to make money with their products although they spent their days hard at work. Their economic status was as low as their belief in themselves.

Xuan Wei County became the seat of the project because it is a county that is typical of the Yunnan Province. It was felt that if the project was successful in this particular region it could be replicated elsewhere. Furthermore, the area had already served for various other ventures: the "Spark" Project, the Project for "Enough to Eat and Wear", an FAO project and a Population Education Project. These projects had proved successful and had paved the way for a wider, more comprehensive project such as the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women.

The Xuan Wei County authority, under the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women, runs some seventy-five skills training classes. Women can choose the courses they want and are advised on those which best suit their situation. They also include other skills necessary for the improvement of living standards such as pre- and post natal care, health care, family planning, and various income-generating skills. The women of Xuan Wei have very few moments in the day to stop and rest. Their life is a continuous cycle of labour and fatigue. As education and training had been seen as a privilege often exclusive to men, the women too had to be convinced that they could learn and that they would not be wasting their time. Moreover, they could choose what to learn. What they learnt would be useful to their work and actually boost the productivity on their farms and, hence, their economic self-reliance.

By purposely linking literacy to actual production and other vital aspects of daily life, the project was able to create a demand for learning. This valuing and relevance of education means more and more women want their children to get a good education. Before it would have been the man who would have gone to the programme or made the decisions about the children or the farm, now it is the women who go to classes and it is difficult to imagine how the trend can be reversed. It is hard to comprehend the enormous benefits experienced by these illiterates-turned-readers. As those responsible for the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women say these women now feel that "they can do anything".

### **Reading and Writing**

Sixty-six per cent of illiterates in Xuan Wei County are women. Literacy classes take place in the early evening around seven to nine o'clock. The women sit by hurricane lamps and learn to read and write the basic 1,500 Chinese characters following standard textbooks. The material covers a wide range of topics from classics like Aesop's fables and Chinese war stores to practical skills, such as pig raising, duck, chicken or quail raising and tofu making or family issues. There is also teaching of arithmetic, simple accounting and abacus use. The activities in the classroom vary but generally, it is a facilitator-centred approach. There are songs about the virtues of literacy which learners enjoy singing among themselves or to their friends.

Once learners acquire a basic level of literacy, they can carry onto more interesting post-literacy books printed with the assistance of the project. To support these literacy activities, the project produces supplementary reading materials in practical Chinese, mathematics, post-literacy and continuing education. According to Wang Rongxue, the project director, it is difficult for these women to relapse into illiteracy because, even in far-flung villages, new literacies are exposed to written words such as posters and wall newspapers. Newsletters are now being sent out to villages.

Due to the lack of learning texts for the teaching of productive skills, the various townships in the country produce their own materials

on technical subjects such as pig raising, bee keeping, mushroom cultivation, fruit tree planting, sewing, embroidery, grain production techniques, township and village enterprises. Since functional contents are also covered in the standard literacy text and classes, learners are taken to observe and try out actual practices of new technology at an experimental farm connected to a secondary vocational school. Women can also observe professional embroidery work.

In cases where learners choose to learn skills for future employment in factories, their newly-acquired skills are tried out during a two-month probation period. During this period it is established whether the learner has reached the standard required for employment or whether further training is needed.

At the same time, videotapes, slides, posters and supplementary learning materials are exposed to the learners. As the literacy workers also teach primary school classes, methods used with primary school learners are often used on women learners. The teachers stand at the front of rows of desks and benches. The learners read along with the teacher, read individually and then in unison. The learners, for example, match synonyms or fill in the blanks. They also learn to use the roman alphabet to read Chinese characters they can't pronounce. The approach to literacy training is continually strengthened by the successful integration of topics adjusted to women's needs. For example, one former textbook showed a man writing letters to another man. The present textbook now shows a woman writing to another woman.

By closely co-operating with the community, the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women has succeeded in creating a conducive climate which has lent support to community development and raised public concern for the need to educate women. Committees have been established and sub-projects founded to generate interest in the general thrust towards development and literacy. To make sure women attended classes regularly was no easy feat. The project organizers and the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) had to carry out door to door campaigns. Teams were organized to ensure women did come to classes and men were encouraged to look after the home in their absence. The

teams talked to reticent parents and husbands, persuaded them that women should be allowed to come to school. As women often have to walk long distances to classes in the evening, the community ensures their safety by electing members to serve as security guards for learners. These "guards" show up at the end of each evening class and escort the learners home. The local media disseminated information on women's education to the county population. Some twenty-three articles were published altogether. Blackboards and wall newspapers were put up in the villages and written materials were spread around to mobilize the greatest number of literates to help in the drive for literacy. It is an inherent part of the programme to work with the media for the promotion of women's status, to develop publicity materials and to link project activities to other ventures.

To encourage the women to come to classes and learn literacy skills, the programme designed an original strategy for easing women's household burdens. Recognizing the unjust balance of power between men and women, the project urged men to take on their share of the housework. Men are shown that they can play a significant role in the education of their children and the family has a chance to better itself by sharing responsibilities. Household chores are no longer to be seen as burdens but rather a chance for husband and wife to come together with their children.

Initially the project met with local resistance and came up against the remnants of feudal concepts of male superiority. As Wang Rongxue says the programme is trying to break traditions and mentalities. Many men objected to their wives or daughters attending lessons when there was so much work at home.

Women who participate in the project vary in age and educational background. Young girls of sixteen learn alongside forty year old mothers. Some are still illiterates, others have been to school and dropped out. Some were fortunate enough to stay until the end of primary school. A few were even luckier - they finished junior secondary school. All had finally accepted their inferior status - they themselves didn't consider they should be educated. The multiple background of learners has proved

to be an asset to more educated learners can help others whilst everyone learns at their own pace. The heterogenous background and age of participants added to the challenge facing the project. It affects the content selection and, to a certain extent, the training methods. But despite their differences, these women now share a common purpose.

### Teachers and Facilitators

In the 1980's China began a new drive for education reform. One important move was that primary schools should be run and financed by the communities themselves. The Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women encourages each school to assume a two-pronged function - as a primary school during the day and as an adult learning centre in the evening. This means, each facilitator (teacher) has to teach two classes, one for children and one for adults. In return for this extra-work, they receive a subsidy of ten per cent of their salary. The township shoulders the responsibility of covering the facilitator's subsidy which in Xuan Wei county is rather low.

For the production training, the organizers of the project call upon health workers or agricultural officers to give lectures and demonstrate new farming techniques. Specialists from organizations like the Agricultural or Livestock departments and experts on local crafts regularly run training which can last between half a day to two weeks.

Fifty-eight project administrative personnel were trained by the Provincial government and thirty other personnel were trained by the County Government. A hundred and sixty-one facilitators were trained, and altogether ninety-six teaching material compilers were trained by the State, Provincial and District governments and UNESCO.

Top level project administrators such as the director and managers were trained at regional level alongside their counterparts from other participating countries. They joined study visits such as those to central and northern Thailand to observe non-formal education programmes for women.

They also attended the three regional training workshops for curricular material development in India and Thailand in 1990 and 1992.

The training, or orientation, was in project management and monitoring, programme planning and curricular and material development. At the regional workshops, they underwent participatory training where they had hands-on experience in preparing gender sensitive curricular units which were later published in Chinese for use in the project.

Those who received wider regional training, in turn, trained programme co-ordinators at county, township and village level. Again, training workshops were aimed at preparing post-literacy material. For practical purpose, the training materials were derived from the manual "*Educate to Empower*", produced by the project and available in Chinese. Training also covered gender sensitivity in women's education as well as how to use reading materials among villagers.

### **Designing relevance: Material Development**

In recent years, questions have been raised as to whether traditional contents and materials in non-formal education designed for women actually contribute to learners' progress and overall development. Analysis of sample material across the world points to the fact that conventional material has often been irrelevant to women's real needs and ignores their actual conditions.

Most conventional materials for women learners are related to only one of women's multiple functions - that of mother and wife. There has been an unbalanced concentration on improving domestic work, childcare and nutrition and sanitation. While these are important they are not the only work women have to do. Advocates of alternative approaches have argued that "non-conventional" material designed with sensitivity could contribute to women's development as well as to the development of their society and nation.

Wang Rongxue, programme director, is convinced that his programme cannot be successful without being relevant to women's actual problems and conditions. "We give them what they ask for and not what we have to offer and since they are farmers looking for ways to improve production, we show them how to improve production". This is one of the most important lessons learnt from the programme.

Women's productivity as earners and farmers is rarely reflected in the texts or illustrations of conventional material. In so doing, according to K.Chlebowska in *Literacy for Rural Women in the Third World*, authors are sending a message to learners that women "don't contribute to productivity or that their contribution doesn't count". Women learners are deprived of realistic and positive role models. When women's work is covered, it is often as if their activities are no more than an extension of their domestic roles. Educational specialists have explained this in terms of society's belief that women's paid work is "secondary and contingent" since they are, anyway, considered financially dependent on their husbands.

Relevance was, therefore, seen to be the key to the acceptance of the programme. For the materials in Xuan Wei care was taken to follow the three main principles in preparing material for women, namely: recognition of women's double responsibility (as housekeepers and economic producers), the need to acknowledge and strengthen women's productive contribution, activities and potential and the realization that when women's productive roles are strengthened, the balance of power between men and women will become more equitable and women's domestic tasks lightened and facilitated.

The material produced within the regional context of the Skills-Literacy Programme for Women shows how women's economic self-reliance, self-confidence, self-respect, selfimprovement and status within society can be enhanced if the following conditions are met.

#### **Condition I:**

##### *Presentation of Women's Actual Condition and Double Responsibilities.*

The needs assessment conducted in the target areas was long and thorough. It became clear during the survey that women's work was being taken for granted. Prejudices remained. Women worked long hours, society didn't recognize their contribution, they had limited access to education and training. The material, therefore, was adapted to translate this situation into words so that learners could see a realistic portrayal of their lives.

In one book, *Cashing in on Cornleaves*, women are portrayed labouring in domestic chores. Danfen in the text *Chicken Care* is seeking new ways to make much-needed cash. In *Beautiful and Productive Courtyard*, Qiaozhen, a young married woman, works alongside her husband and in-laws to make the most of their land. Xi Mei, a young mountain girl, with her baby sister strapped to her back watches longingly as her brothers go to school. Xi Mei is shown as conditioned into accepting that she, as a female, has to accept her status and more than her fair share of the household burden.

#### **Condition II:**

#### *Enhancing Economic Productivity*

The most basic prerequisite for empowerment is economic self-reliance. Everywhere in rural Xuan Wei, women following literacy and agro-technology classes say they are doing so to "become rich". All material reflects this desire for lucrative activities: Xi Mei is fish farming, Dongfeng is using modern techniques in chicken care, Fuji has become successful in the craft business and A Xiang is using new farming skills. These are a few examples of the skills women can master and want to learn. By proving women can be successful with these materials, the message is clear - women, like men have the potential to master science and technology.

The material is effective because it provides knowledge and skills that relate directly to local conditions. The project appreciates the women's social, cultural and educational background and their potential as well as the limitations that exist in the Province of Yunnan (weather, water and soil conditions). For example, mushroom growing is particularly appropriate in Yunnan where more than 200 varieties of mushroom thrive. Similarly, taken Xuan Wei County's fame for ham, production and pig-raising could be enhanced. The material is clearly based on scientific knowledge. Material developers and agricultural officials work together to prepare adapted learning material that is technically accurate and, at the same time, reflects the learners's environment. It is easy to understand for learners with limited reading skills and experience. Co-operation between farmers, workers and material developers carries on with training

sessions. During these sessions, the agricultural experts demonstrate, in actual conditions, how to improve crops or livestock. Follow-up sessions are vital if the learners, in turn, are to become competent and able to teach others. Lastly the skills taught go well beyond simple production skills. They also cover management skills, including accounting, decision making, problem solving, managing people and allocating resources.

### **Condition III :** *Promoting Women's Status in Society*

Portraying actual conditions is only a part of the success of the material. This does not mean these conditions are accepted unconditionally. On the contrary, the texts condemn overburdening housework and the way young girls are deprived of education. In the *Changing of a Girl's Life*, Xi Mei's persistent desire to learn leads to heated discussions between the teacher and her parents on whether girls should be educated. The teacher wins the argument and takes Xi Mei in. The text then shows Xi Mei's progress until she becomes a model farmer and receives the title of "sister of a thousand Yuan".

Qiaozhen, in *Beautiful and Productive Courtyard*, is an active learner at the night school where she learns new farming techniques. With her growing confidence, she convinces her husband to start an integrated farming project on their plot of land. She ends up teaching other village women how to turn their courtyards into orchards. When the villagers congratulate the husband on his success, he points to her and proudly says it was "Qiaozhen's idea".

### **Condition IV:** *Lightening Women's Domestic Work*

From the needs assessment, it was clear that women in Xuan Wei were continually busy and occupied-both inside and outside the home. The literacy and training material reflects the emerging trend in China, where men accept more and more of their share of the housework and childcare. In *Murderer in your House*, for example, Jinfeng is seen enjoying her hard-earned income whilst her husband reads funny stories

to the children. Qioazhen in *Beautiful and Productive Courtyard* is shown by candle light as her husband talks to their small daughter. When Qiaoshen works her daughter works too. They laugh a great deal and what was previously a chore is turned into a co-operative effort.

So many years the mistaken traditional idea that women's work was housework has determined the contents of literacy materials and restricted their themes. The so-called female skills, like tailoring, embroidery and handicraft arts have usually made up the educational materials for women but it makes no sense to teach them how to paint little flowers when their concern is how to produce a solid and healthy pig. Furthermore, vocational skills will continue to have little effect unless they are linked to management or entrepreneurial abilities. This is the strength of the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women which answers specific needs in a particular area. It is prepared to first fill the technology gap by educating women in modern agro-technology and afterwards prepare them to cope with China's shift towards a market economy. The pupils need not go through examinations, or sit through endless classes on irrelevant material. Their test lies in the application of what they have learnt in their farming techniques and production. So much so that their family's well-being is at stake, if they fail. A great challenge and reward for them also lies in the immediate use of their new knowledge and skills without having to wait for graduation. Successful experiments in farming can be replicated to hundreds of farmers rapidly. This innovation is vital to the success of the programme and ensures that a woman is rewarded with the satisfaction that her technique is helping other women in the same situation. It encourages the women to come up with new methods but also gives them a strong sense of duty and citizenship. The farming system of the programme is at the heart of its success.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

One of the project's major strengths is regular and systematic monitoring. Monitoring was done at three levels -county, province and regional. In China, project managers, led by the county adult education chief, visited the villages on the project site at six month intervals. Formal reports were also submitted to the provincial and prefecture authorities. The provincial focal point for project implementation in Kunming also

paid a yearly visit to the Xuan Wei project site, where discussions on project progress and obstacles were carried out. There are also informal visits allowing for close observation of project activities as well as interaction with learners, their families, community leaders, facilitators and co-ordinators. As this is a wider regional project, arrangements were made for progress sharing at all three regional training workshops. In addition, two tripartite reviews were organized in 1992 and 1994. At the tripartite reviews, obstacles in project implementation were discussed among country representatives, UNDP and UNESCO. The tripartite review discussions were based on the papers each country prepared prior to attending the review, and based on common guidelines.

Consultants were also sent from UNESCO PROAP to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project into other areas in Yunnan. In assessing progress and identifying areas for improvement, care was also taken to qualitatively review material produced as well as to verify that those who had undergone training in the project were applying the knowledge and skills they acquired in their everyday work. Informal communication with individuals at all levels added a degree of authenticity to official reporting. Anecdotal details on the impact of the project on learners' lives are recorded in all fields although a systematic individual follow-up of learners is not available to date. For future project monitoring this gap might have to be bridged.

The earning capacity of participants of the Skills-based Literacy Programme has risen considerably. New skills double or even triple income. The example of Shu Ling from Lai Ping Township is revealing. Before the Xuan Wei programme she earned well below the average per capita rate for the province which is of some Y600/year (40 US dollars). She had to depend on government subsidies for fertilizer, food and medicine. After a couple of months of machine embroidery training, Shu Ling became the best learner and was able to earn enough to live without subsidies. This newly-found self-reliance gave her confidence in her capacities and she is currently saving up to buy herself an embroidery machine. Another woman Lhuo Lu Lin, aged forty followed the advice of those teaching her on the farming programme of the Skills-based Literacy Programme and began to grow fruit trees on her strip of land.

She soon had to hire two workers and get her brother and sister-in-law involved. Her present income stands at Y 10,000 a year (900 US dollars). She is using the money to buy household goods, rice, cookers and children's clothes.

Achievements have been reported throughout Xuan Wei county: 36,000 illiterate women have become literate and the illiteracy rate among young girls has dropped twenty nine per cent to below the average for the whole province. Some 313 classes were held for technical training, these were attended by 275,000 women between the ages of thirty and fifty. Out of these women some 7,215 were then able to play a major role in carrying out new production and management techniques. There were over seventy five training courses, mainly techniques for growing vegetables or animal breeding, which cover subjects such as health care, ecological matter and other production and living skills. The social and economic benefits of the training courses which were attended by many people were considerable and specific technical advances greatly contributed to the well-being of the villagers. For example, energy-saving kitchen stoves were built which managed to conserve forty-two per cent more heat and limit pollution within the home. The maize harvest was increased through the simple technique of close planting of seeds and the latest pig-breeding techniques meant an average thirty one per cent rise in earnings and greater sanitation.

It is not enough, though, to measure the achievements of the programme in terms of economics and material well-being. By becoming literate the women open up a whole wealth of possibilities. By joining literacy classes, one woman Chu Yun Song, managed to turn part of her house into a small mushroom growing concern. It's not that she just learnt about mushrooms but as she says "I learnt to read brand names of goods in the market, I learnt to read about methods of mushroom farming". She now manipulates glasstubes, chemicals and special lamps with great skill. This transformation after the literacy programme is compared to a kind of revelation by many of the women. One young villager remembers how she used to get lost in the streets of Kunming as she couldn't read the signs. The same woman now has a small shop and sells clothes. She feels capable of doing much more and is aware of the

possibilities ahead. Du, a young mother, remembers how when she was young there was no possibility of schooling. Girls didn't go to school. She herself was illiterate only three years ago but now conducts embroidery classes. These changes have transformed the balance of power that used to dominate the lives of many of these women.

Political will and local structures were such that they helped the programme reach out to the widest group of people possible. Those co-ordinating the project did all they could to ensure the sustainability of the programme by monitoring and listening to feedback. They did not hesitate in front of corrective measures and made sure that participants and facilitators were well-suited to the programme. Furthermore, the various skills of the participants and facilitators were deliberately focussed on those which seemed the best adapted to the project's targets.

Funding sources were purposely diversified to avoid the programme becoming dependent on one source. The implementation of the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women has reached a wide range of poor women from the farming communities of one of the poorest areas of China, but has cost the country not more than 810,000 Yuan (54,000 US dollars). Of this, 200,000 Yuan (18,000 US dollars) were provided by the Yunnan Province; 130,000 Yuan (10,000 US dollars) by the districts and 430,000 Yuan (31,000 US dollars) by the country. UNESCO contributed 33,000 US dollars worth of seed money which was used for:

- organization of training of managers and teachers
- printing of nine booklets of 20,000 copies
- gender-sensitive material development
- equipment such as camera and computer
- regional training and field visits

By comparison with other non-formal education programmes, the cost per head of this project is amazingly low. This, as well as the drastic increase in the learner's income means that the programme has been remarkably cost-effective.

In brief the project's strengths can be stated as the following:

- a centralized planning combined with a well-established management structure from the provincial level down to the village level,
- involvement of the local Women's Federation to provide external support to the project e.g. mobilizing learners, intervention when learner's family prohibit participation and launching a campaign to promote the lightening of women's domestic workload,
- serious focus on women's income- earning capacity combined with health and civic awareness,
- effective co-ordination between various relevant ministeries: education, agriculture, health, environment,
- pooling of resources from donor agencies, eg UNDP, UNESCO, WFP,
- overall, the matching of socio-economic goals of the nation with individual needs and aspirations has been the major hallmark of this project. It has meant a particularly pragmatic version of "functional relevance" which has led the project to success, despite its relatively traditional educational base.

As the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women will continue its fight to improve the condition and education of women in Xuan Wei County, improvement will be needed in the following fields:

- continued upgrading of personnel involved in the project, notably as concerns gender-sensitivity,
- future project activities need to involve and educate husbands and children to a greater degree;
- the empowerment aspect of the programme could be strengthened.

Finally, if the full impact of the project is to be measured, the improvement in income, the effect on children's education and changes in family patterns need to be monitored in a simultaneous fashion.

## Conclusion

It is obvious from the Chinese experiment of the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women that literacy and production projects for women need to tackle the issues which lie at the heart of the learners' aspirations and feelings. Effective literacy materials alone do not guarantee an improvement in women's productive roles. The successful programmes run in Xuan Wei county show that education for development must also reinforce a woman's self-esteem. The Xuan Wei programme is already a success in terms of its outreach, sustainability and measurable economic improvement. It shows that non-formal education can be used to enhance national economic development and that women have a vital role to play in the process.

This success of the Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women in Xuan Wei can be explained in many ways. Firstly the Chinese Central Government's policy to strengthen economic progress in the remote rural areas formed a solid basis for the programme and non-formal education was seen as the most effective way of delivering science and technology to a population previously deprived of education of any kind. Secondly the Government's goals were swiftly translated into definitive directives and disseminated to people who were able to identify with them.

Ingenious methods of assessing the economic potential of the region and then combining this with the needs of the population were turned into a pragmatic and realistic project approach. Furthermore, once the project authorities were convinced of the merit of their approach, the project was integrated into the existing practice of non-formal education in Yunnan and found a way to sustain itself and even expand into other areas. The fact that the programme responds closely to women's needs and that participants' achievements are tangible and visible created further credibility in the community around.

In short, the project and the scale of its success have been made possible because of a convergence of the government's economic goals, the villager's actual needs, the integration of gender issues into learning material and a pragmatic approach perhaps unique to China. The single greatest conclusion to come out of the Yunnan Programme is that quite apart from literacy, basic education for women, whether it be formal or non-formal, is the best investment China can make for its future.

## WOMEN'S SELF-RELIANCE AND EDUCATION MOVEMENT

### Introduction

A decade ago, 300 angry women workers on a road-building project in Bangladesh, most of them illiterate, surrounded their district's Martial Law Office after realizing they had 'signed up' with their fingerprints for a smaller wage than they had been promised. It caused a political upset and convinced the women of the need for education, so as to secure their basic rights.

In a traditional Muslim society like Bangladesh, women are not often seen working on roads — admittedly a low status employment — or staging demonstrations. But most of these women belonged to Saptagram Nari Swanirvar Parishad - the Seven Villages Women's Self-Reliance Movement - a grassroots organization founded in 1976 by history professor Rokeya Rahman Kabeer. Today, the movement, to help deprived, landless women understand the causes of their oppression, take charge of their lives and work on income-generating projects, has spread to over 900 villages, reaching 22,000 members.

One of Saptagram's most original features, introduced in the mid-1980s, is a gender-oriented syllabus that has attracted the interest of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bangladesh. This year, to relieve the shortage of female teachers in the expanding education programme, Saptagram has begun hiring its own graduates as future instructors, giving women an additional source of income and enhanced

status in a country where only one in five primary school teachers is women and female illiteracy, at 77 per cent, is one of the highest in the world. The women-centered curriculum is especially relevant, since the government has promised to aim at Education for All, of which non-formal basic education is a key part.

What makes Saptagram different from the several hundred NGOs working in this country of 114 million inhabitants, one of the five poorest in the world and regularly devastated by natural disasters? From the start, Saptagram has seen its struggle as a challenge to keeping women inferior and separate from men. "We have been told all our lives by our mothers, aunts and grandmothers that our place is at the feet of our husband", says Lily Begum, a Saptagram member. Girls are often married at 10, payment of exorbitant dowries can ruin families, and women are supposed to be invisible and isolated, in accordance with the old ideal of female seclusion, or *purdah*.

Rather than taking a welfare-biased or short-term approach to development, Saptagram concentrates on empowerment of its members, starting with the assertion that strength lies in unity and group solidarity. Its aims are:

- 1) *To work among women in poor rural areas*
- 2) *To make them aware of the causes of their social and economic deprivation and give them the means to gain more control over their lives*
- 3) *To initiate non-traditional income-generating activities on a cooperative basis and give women some control over resources*
- 4) *To provide education to groups, with emphasis on book-keeping. The gender-oriented syllabus also reinforces women's knowledge of their rights. The education programme grew from the women's demand for classes, as they came to realize the links between education, employment opportunities and basic human rights*
- 5) *To provide knowledge of health and nutrition*

The presence of women at all levels of the organization, from senior management to the field is unique in rural development work in Bangladesh, and kills the myth that women need male protection if they are to work in the countryside.

For the past ten years, Saptagram has received funding from OXFAM, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and one-off grants from other sources for special project. To speed up the time-consuming process of applying for funds, Saptagram has drawn up an integrated rural development programme for 1993-1996. Based on the recommendations of an evaluation report and a 1992 management review, it aims to consolidate Saptagram's activities, and is being funded by a consortium.

### Tackling Gender Disparities in Bangladesh

When Rokeya Kabeer returned to Bangladesh in 1976, five years after it emerged from a nightmarish civil war, she resigned from her position at a government college. An upper-class women from Calcutta, she set off for the village of Komarpur, where her in-laws lived, in Faridpur district, one of the country's most backward regions.

Saptagram began in the early days of the United Nations Decade for Women, Aid donors in Bangladesh (Where foreign loans and grants were 7.2 per cent of GDP in 1990) gave more for women's programmes, emphasizing women as producers, not only child-bearers. At state level, General Zia-ur Rahman, who came to power in 1975, zealously took up the cause of Women and Development, creating a Ministry of Women's Affairs and increasing to 30 the number of parliamentary seats reserved for women.

In those days, the notion of 'women development' helped to challenge the age-old preconception of women at all levels of Bangladesh society. It also opened up new possibilities for women to organize and struggle for their common interests. Women's organizations started campaigning against dowry and opened shelters for women who had been victims of violence. As a result, the government passed new laws on these issues.

However, "in their quest for internal constituency and external legitimacy, successive military regimes have sought to reconcile apparently contradictory political programmes", writes Naila Kabeer, a scholar at Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies. "the contradictions are most apparent in the sphere of women's rights, since state policy has, on the one hand, championed 'women in development' values and the emancipation of women, and on the other, set in motion a 'creeping' Islamisation process, thereby encouraging those who would snatch back the gains that women have made."

At state level, promises of emancipation and participation in development have not been followed up. Public sector funding for women's programmes only got 0.06 per cent of the budget under the first five year plan and around 0.20 for the second and third.

Today, some 99.4 million people live below the poverty line, a disproportionate number of them women. In 1989-1990, the nutritional intake of women was 88 per cent that of males and they earned 40 per cent less than men. While 8 per cent of male-led households were classed as very poor, the corresponding figure for female-headed households is 33 per cent. Only 23 per cent of the female population is literate, compared to 44 per cent of men.

In 1993, compulsory primary education was extended to the whole country, and as part of a pledge to narrow the gender gap in education, free education for girls in rural areas has been extended from Grade 5 to Grade 8. Secondary education, from the age of 10, lasts for up to seven years. 22 per cent of the country's 17.6 million primary school-age children never attend school. Of the 13.7 million who do enroll (67 per cent boys, 57 per cent girls), 60 per cent drop out before completing the five-year cycle with most dropping out in the first three grades. Enrolment ratio at the secondary level was equivalent to 18 per cent (24 per cent of boys, 11 per cent of girls).

Growing landlessness is slowly deteriorating the social fabric of Bangladesh, where 80 per cent of the population is rural. Nine per cent of Bangladeshis own 80 per cent of the land, and some 60 million people are functionally landless. Studies predict that by 1995 three quarters of

the rural population will be in this category, partly because of inheritance rules which divide property equally between all sons. (muslim law allows daughters to inherit land, but in practice, social factors and family politics prevent women claiming these formal rights).

Many NGOs are working — and often competing — throughout the country. Most have integrated the ‘women and development’ component into their strategies. But many put women into labour-intensive, low-profit sectors, such as handicrafts or poultry rearing, using very simple technology. One study found 70 per cent of training curricula in women’s programmes (government, private and international), were mostly embroidery, sewing and knitting. On the other hand, country-wide initiatives such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and the Grameen Bank have encouraged women to start up small businesses and other productive activities outside the home. Over the past two decades, BRAC has promoted income generating projects among the rural poor and created a network of over 12,000 primary schools.

Despite their involvement at grassroots level, Kabeer argues that none of these programmes are completely geared towards women, partly because they are not run by women. “If you want to work with women, you must have women to understand what the problem is. But that is not done by male NGOs”, she told a seminar at Reading University in 1992. “They are now desperately trying to get women on staff because there is pressure from the funders to have competent women in their organization.”

### **Saptagram: Confronting Problems Together**

Saptagram is based on the belief that women, once united, can work for their own development. The movement’s target groups have not altered since it was founded in 1976: women from poor peasant families (0.5-1.5 acres of land holdings, a half-acre of land being worth approximately Tk 25,000/\$665); rural households depending on wage labour or non-agricultural incomes, and women who have been deserted, divorced or widowed. Women who have drifted into towns alone or with their families, often after being cast out of rural society, are of growing concern to Saptagram, which, since the early 1980s has included a few

male groups. These were formed at the insistence of women group members who felt that working with poor landless men could help improve their own lives. The ratio of women to men's groups is 4:1. About 40 per cent of Septagram's members are under 25, 40 per cent between 26 and 40, 12 per cent between 41 and 55 and the rest over 56.

Saptagram's approach towards forming groups of women, usually of 25-30 members, has changed little since the organization's beginnings. Trained field staff approach women in villages on foot, talking to them, listening to their concerns, and winning their confidence. Although today groups of women often approach field staff to ask for advice and help to form a new group, the task was a more dangerous one when Saptagram planted its first seeds.

Kabeer was the first to run afoul of the pivotal role played by class and kinship in the village. Kerosene was poured over one of the project's centres and Kabeer got death threats. "The main problem was from the rich", says Kabeer. "I was told I would be killed. They wanted me to leave the place in fear, and if I did leave, I knew I would never return. So I must stuck it out." Saptagram lies to keep its distance from village leaders. "When we set up new groups, we don't contact the village leaders because we're a government-registered NGO" says a senior member of Saptagram. "But if any problem arises, then we contact the village leaders." She explains that religious political parties like the Jamaat-i-Islam often propagate the notion that women should respect purdah by remaining secluded at home. "We try to overcome this propaganda through discussion."

Credit is one of the main motivations from forming groups, and is given at group level. The importance of capital formation is stressed from the very first loan. To get a loan, a group must save money: groups decide how much each member must save, from Tk 5 to 10 (\$0.15 to \$0.25) per month. For the most destitute women, a traditional method of setting aside one handful of rice per day from the daily family allotment is encouraged. As a guide, one kilo of the lowest quality rice costs about Tk 10, while a kilo of mutton would be worth Tk 100. It usually takes about a year for women to save the fixed amount. As savings grow, women gain a sense of security and confidence, as well as feeling of group unity. As of December 1992, total group savings were Tk 5.86 million (\$0.15 million).

## **Demystifying the Live of Women**

As groups build up savings, field workers visit them about once a week to discuss their plans for a cooperative economic venture. Since women's first choice is to opt for home-based programmes, discussions turn into a broader debate on taboos governing their lives, from sexual division of labour that keeps women in low-income activities, to social issues, such as early marriage, household violence, rape, and land and wage rights. Saptagram's staff refers to this as the 'nursing period', or a time of 'consciousness-raising', during which a strong relationship develops between group members.

Groups are advised and guided, rather than led, forcing them to take more responsibility for action. These months are a time of 'demystification', aimed at examining the contradictions inherent in the radiation of *purdah* "Women in torn sarees working behind the dilapidated walls of their huts are hardly secluded from the view of outsiders", says Kabeer. When asked about their oppression, they will tend to say passively that it's their kismet, or God's will. Field staff will mildly challenge this, gradually giving them a greater awareness of their condition, and a sense of initiative.

Collective action, or and alone, is urged to resolve legal and economic repression. This generally involves marching on the local upon council's office to report abuses (theft of money, extortion of dowry, threats of divorce, rape) and demand for action. In 1992, the groups were involved in 84 such cases and solved their problem in 70 of them.

With each case, women gain a moral victory and a sense of power, though some times at great cost. When SIDA's first secretary for development cooperation visited a Saptagram group in the mid-1980s, show recalls that the men wouldn't allow women to come together. "They were so daring. They said 'We don't care. We are coming outside to meet, to talk about what is happening in our lives and our families' Women often used to be beaten by men when they went home. But they had the strength of the group behind them."

### Taking Out Loans: A Collective Decision

In 1992, Tk 2.1 million (\$56,000) was disbursed in loans, an average of Tk 13,000 (\$346) per group. Saptagram loans up to half the total cost of the project, with the remainder met by group savings. The organization says it has an almost 10 per cent recovery rate. Groups may share out profits or add them to their savings to increase investment potential. As loans are repaid — according to a schedule decided by the group — new, larger loans may be requested on the basis of greater experience and savings. Under pressure from funders, Saptagram started charging five per cent interest on loans in 1990, which increased to 10 per cent in July 1993 to cover inflation, identified as the main reason for leakage in the revolving loan funds.

"We want to make women aware they can do everything men can", says Kabeer, explaining Saptagram's approach to rural credit. Groups are involved in a range of economic activities.

Breaking the tradition of only participating in post-harvest activities, women are now leasing arable land as well as tilling land themselves. Landowners seeking mortgages against their land frequently approach the local women's group which charges less interest than money-lenders. Mortgages are given for two years or more, during which the group works the land, enjoying full benefit of the crops produced on it. This greater interest in agriculture has led women to produce processed rice and sell produce at the weekly or bi-weekly village market, the *hat*, a sphere traditionally reserved for men. "At first, women said we can't go to the market", recalls Kabeer. "We went with one of the oldest women — she was 45. Nobody jeered. The women then said they could continue alone. It's a giant leap forward for Muslim women to sit in the market and sell their goods."

With training and technical assistance from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), groups have also re-excavated ponds for fish breeding — a source of seasonal income — and horticulture, which includes home vegetable gardening. New seed varieties and food-crops have been introduced, such as soya dal, which provides an extra source of nutrition for families.

Saptagram is also proud of giving women access to modern technology. At the time of the 1992 evaluation, six power tillers and three shaow pump machines had been bought with Saptagram loans. In the village of Ghonghosail, a men's and women's group joined in managing a successful power tiller business. It took them two and a half years to save enough to by a power tiller. One women and one man were trained to drive it. During the season, a group can make Tk 1,200 a day (\$32). Part of their earnings are invested in petty trade for greater economic security. Besides breaking the taboo of women ploughing land, the experience also shows that men's and women's group scan work together, and that the latter are perfectly able to participate in a technology project.

About a third of Saptagram loans are for petty trade and stock business, which involves opening small grocery shops, and the buying and reselling of goods. Other activities are more traditional, including poultry and livestock rearing, and poultry vaccination.

One Saptagram member sums up her feelings: "Before, we did not come out for work, except to work in the houses of rich people. We are now doing earth work, selling our products in the village market, even selling things from house to house. This could not have happened before. Who would have faced punishment. Village elders could even have turned us out of the village." Today, as Saptagram becomes more established, the vitriolic reactions it drew in its early days have given way to tolerance, even acceptance. Men's support groups have sprung up, lending their voice in social actions.

This year, Saptagram plans to give its first individual loans to women actively involved in the organization for at least five years. Women can apply for an individual loan if they have shown leadership and management skills in social actions and income-generating Projects. They must also be graduates of the adult literacy course and have sound accounting skills.

### **Sericulture: Women at all Stages of Production**

Sericulture — the raising and care of silkworms to produce raw silk — was seen as a sector which could provide employment to women

at all stages of production, and so has been one of Saptagram's most comprehensive income-generating projects. The current programme has group members involved in mulberry plantation, cultivation of sapling nurseries and cocoon rearing. Nine staff members specialized in sericulture work closely with field staff and group members.

The programme's success led to setting up of a silk production centre in 1986 at Rajbari, Faridpur, with a grant from the Swiss Development Cooperation. By putting in reeling machines for yarn production, Saptagram has become a buyer of cocoons in a fiercely competitive market. The factory indirectly benefits about 800 mulberry-tree farmers. A total of 183 women are employed at the centre and have gained experience in reeling, spinning, weaving, dyeing and twisting. Saptagram also runs literacy classes for women at the centre. A feasibility study commissioned by Saptagram in 1990 led to the project receiving additional funding totaling Tk. 20 million (\$0.5 million) from the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA), and Bread for the World. The project include building a factory and installing new equipment. In 1992, the centre produced nearly 5,000 meters of silk cloth and had sales of Tk 830,000 (\$22,100), 26 per cent more than in 1991. Saptagram is aiming for Tk 4.8 million (\$126,000) in sales in 1993-1994 with a more aggressive marketing strategy and the hiring of a marketing advisor.

The Bangladesh Sericulture Board has supported the centre by giving technical training to workers, displaying Saptagram silk products in its showrooms and inviting staff to seminars and workshops to promote the industry.

### **Learning About Health**

According to a 1993 report by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, "the most distressing statistic is the position of he government system as a source of rural health care. Only 10 per cent of rural illnesses are treated through government health care, which represents a slight decline from 1990". Group members needing medical attention are often accompanied to government health centre to ensure that they receive proper treatment. Saptagram's work focuses on preventive health. Field staff include health, nitration, hygiene and family planning in village

seminars and literacy programmes. Group members are taught to prepare saline solutions to fight dehydration in diarrhoeal diseases. Children are treated against worms. In addition, after pressure from the field, Saptagram devised a 'Pure Water to the People' programme and a sanitation programme.

In the first of these, group members are encouraged to use tubewell water for drinking. Impure water causes almost 60 per cent of disease in rural Bangladesh. Saptagram provides tubewells to the groups, which pay for boring and a concrete ground at the base. Some of the groups have been trained to install and maintain tubewells. In the sanitation programme — access to sanitary latrines is only 12 per cent — women are involved in producing rings and slabs for sanitary latrines. Both programmes have introduced group members to alternative sources of employment.

Saptagram sells a low dose birth control pill to members, informs women of family planning measures but goes no further than providing them with a referral service.

### **Education: A Course Designed for Women**

"One of the first things I did when I started Saptagram was to introduce education among women", recalls Kabeer. "It completely failed because adult women were not interested in education. They asked us to teach their children". It was only after women started getting more involved in income-generating activities — and were cheated of their full wages — that they began to realize the need for education in order to keep their accounts. "We could have tied our credit programme to education, making it a rule that only those who attended education classes could get credit. Instead, we waited for the women to appreciate the importance of education themselves. The women came to us for education", says Kabeer proudly.

Saptagram used government and then BRAC-designed literacy materials before concluding that both projected a 'male-oriented' view of development. Women themselves questioned the pictures in the books that portrayed men earning money and ploughing the fields, and women

looking after the house, fetching water and looking after chickens. The pictures clashed with the knowledge women had gained from their involvement with Saptagram.

From its experience in working with deprived, rural women, Saptagram developed its own syllabus with the help of a specialist in adult education. The materials were reviewed after input from field workers, and have won government prizes two years in a row. Within Bangladesh, other organizations, including Save the Children-USA, Polly Sree and the Social Development Society, have introduced the materials into their adult literacy classes and have asked Saptagram for teacher training. Saptagram sells each set of primary level education materials for Tk 500 (\$13).

The first stage of the literacy programme lasts about six months, with an average of six classes a week. Students follow a booklet containing 39 words and phrases about health, religious customs, work, social and political rights, and the environment. The aim is to teach women the letters that make up the words, at the same time generating discussion of the word's meaning and relevance to women's lives. The primer also has a simple numeracy section, introducing women to basic operations. To lead the women through the booklet, teachers use flash cards and a large-format 76-page primer. Each meaningful word is illustrated. In one drawing entitled 'Seclusion', a veiled woman is walking with her husband and boy. In another, entitled 'Dowry', scales are shown with a woman on one side, weighed against a bicycle, a radio, a clock and other goods. Early marriage, repression, corruption, violence and divorce are also portrayed. Offering women a different vision of their lives, illustrations show the power gained from unity, the importance of education, and women working in non-traditional activities and attending meetings to defend their rights. On the pages opposite, the syllabic structure and letters forming the word are shown. The teacher helps students to make up other words with the letters just learnt.

In Kabeer's eyes, one of the most important pictures is entitled 'Address'. A postman is handing a letter to a woman. "This is a tremendous achievement", says Kabeer. "Women have no identity. You can only write to them care of their husband, their father, brother or

another male relative. We managed to get recognition by society, government and police that these women do exist." In another lesson, a women is writing a letter, one of the assignments in Saptagram classes.

The second part of the education programme develops reading and numerary skills. Women get a book of 15 stories, written in simple language, each with a message aimed at deepening women's understanding of issues introduced at the primary stage. The illustrated stories touch on subjects like the importance of registering a marriage (a contract spelling out marriage payments), family planning and procedures for acquiring land. To encourage discussion and thought, students are questioned at the end of each story. During the six-month course, numeracy gets special attention so as to help women with book-keeping. "At this stage, we introduce more advanced mathematics, not merely numeracy, because we want group members to be able to maintain their account-books properly and independently", says Saptagram's senior education officer. It is testing time for both teachers and students: "We find this stage the most difficult. Women tend to lose interest and drop out. We're not sure yet how many will learn to do more advanced accounts", says Kabeer. "If we manage to teach five members from each group, we will be satisfied, even if we hope to do better than that."

Saptagram also publishes a 60-page booklet on health and nutrition entitled 'How we can get rid of diseases.' It focuses on common contagious diseases, their causes and symptoms, and describes preventive measures. The information is presented in very simple form, and is designed to maintain women's interest in reading after they have finished the second part of the course. A similar booklet is being prepared on legal aid. Saptagram also plans to publish a newsletter to encourage women to continue reading and keep them abreast of events affecting their lives.

About 40 per cent of Saptagram 1,120 groups participate in the adult education programmes, which are also open to non-members. Assessing its adult literacy programme, Saptagram cites an 8 per cent drop-out rate and praises women's regular attendance that partly results from letting them determine class hours. In addition, realizing the importance of learning, women have started coming to classes with their daughters when the latter can't attend regular schools. One of the most

rewarding results of the programme is to see women keeping their own accounts, taking down minutes in group meetings or helping their children with school homework. Knowing how to keep accounts can also increase their influence in the household: "Now my husband talks to me and asks my advice", says one group member.

### **The Teachers: Keeping up with Demand**

"We can't keep up with the demand for education amongst women, it has suddenly taken off", says Kabeer. In 1992, Saptagram had 167 teachers, who taught 296 classes involving 3,485 students. Most teachers give two classes a day to different groups and receive Tk 800 a month (\$21).

Saptagram advertises for teachers in the local press and hires after an interview and a written test. Until now, teachers have come from different social backgrounds and have usually finished secondary school. But joining Saptagram's teaching staff also means understanding the organization's goals. "We sometimes have difficulties in making them understand that they are not merely teachers but are helping to develop society", says Saptagram's senior education officer. "It also takes time for them to understand the cause of exploitation and oppression in society, as well as the status of women in the development process." It is why new recruits spend four weeks in the field to witness the 'consciousness-raising' process at work. The second part of the training is an intensive seven day session in a classroom situation. It deals with social awareness, legal literacy, gender relations and development, and practical demonstrations of the lessons, with emphasis on participation. After six months in the field, teachers return to the training centre in Swastipur for a three-day refresher course. A maximum of 20 teachers are trained at a time.

Teachers have several guides to help them through the course. All emphasize the need to make each class relevant to women's lives and to encourage participation.

Due to the difficulty of recruiting female instructors, Saptagram has decided to train some of its graduates to become teachers. In July

1993, it chose 50 students from its group members for a six-week training course before being assigned to the field. Besides providing a respectable employment option to rural women, Saptagram believes its own learners may be best at educating rural women. Over the next three years, Saptagram aims to increase its teachers to 300, in order to reach 7,200 students.

### **Saptagram's Management: Women at all Levels**

The presence of women at all levels of the organization, from the field to the executive board, has been one of Saptagram's earliest hallmarks.

The project area, now covering a fifth of the country, has two zones, the Faridpur district, and the Jessore and Kushtia districts. Each is run by a zonal coordinator, with four centres under her authority. Each centre has its own director. These centres, located in the villages, are catalysts for change. First, they attract attention, since eight to ten field staff, generally female, live there together, which is very unusual in rural Bangladesh. Second, they are places where group members can come for information or to attend workshops. Every week, field staff meet with their centre directors to discuss programme activities and their experiences and difficulties.

Every two months, the zonal coordinators meet with the four centre directors of their region and at least two field staff members, chosen on a rotation basis, to discuss progress in implementing programmes.

The Dhaka head office, with 19 people, acts as a coordinating agency. The organization's main policy-making body is the 13-member central committee of the centre heads, the zonal coordinators, the sericulture coordinator, and representatives of field staff and management. Policies are decided at this level, after hearing feedback from the field. All central committee members are required to make regular visits to the villages to keep in close touch with field staff and group members.

The present set-up dates from the mid-1980s, when Saptagram restructured itself, improved staff training and decentralized decision-

making. This was in response to an evaluation by OXFAM as well as to the sudden swelling of its ranks by staff and target groups from Nijera Kori, a women's organization that had recently split. Another turning point was the appointment of a project director, Tahera Yasmin, to succeed Professor Kabeer. "My arrival sent a message to Saptagram and to the NGO community that there had to be changes in the leadership and that an organization can carry on with people other than its founders", said Yasmin, noting the importance of a change in leadership for organizational growth. As a report by SIDA noted, "it requires a certain confidence in one's ability to take over from the founder of an organization, especially one who has managed every facet of its development to date." During her tenure (Yasmin resigned in 1993), she worked towards the institutionalization of Saptagram. "Like most NGOs in Bangladesh", she says, "Saptagram was run like a voluntary organization and there was need for a move towards professionalism." This resulted in strengthening training and commissioning a management review. Its recommendations, currently being implemented through a technical assistance plan, include installing a computer-operated system to better analyze and systematize field report, and improved monitoring of programmes.

### **The Field Staff: Key Agents of Change**

Saptagram's first efforts were hampered by the choice of upper-class women, often daughters of influential figures in the community such as the landed gentry, to work with the deprived in their own villages. "These girls were not only required to work among the poorest section of the community but also to act as the vanguard of a movement to bring about social change, starting from their village", explains a Saptagram report. "This approach failed because the barriers between the workers and their target groups proved to be impregnable."

This forced Saptagram to scrutinize the social and economic background of staff. Today, most are from the lower middle class, and have completed secondary education. They are chosen by application to the regional offices. After interviews and a one-week orientation, they are placed with an experienced field worker for a one-month trial. The new

recruits observe how groups are formed, learn to conduct meetings and workshops, write reports, keep minutes at the meetings and prepare monthly field visit schedules. To avoid conflicts of interest, they never work in their own village. After this month-long session in the field, recruits return to the Swastipur Training Centre for a two-week course on theoretical and practical issues.

The field workers play a key role in nurturing groups, through dedication, listening and regular visits to the village: "The skill of the field staff worker is vital to the formation, development and longevity of the target groups", writes Inez Gibbons in an evaluation done for SIDA in 1990. "Her ability to motivate, inform, counsel and encourage the members is essential to the group's cohesion, financial success and often community relations. A well-qualified field staff worker will bring a group along quickly while one with poor skills can destroy a group that is not strong from within."

Saptagram has 55 field workers. 80 per cent of them married and 60 per cent with children. Each is responsible for supervision 20 to 25 groups. About half the field staff live at the Saptagram centre in their district, with their children. A field worker's average salary is between Tk 2,000 and Tk 2,500 (\$53 to \$66) a month. Every year, all staff attend a three-day field animators' workshop at the Swastipur Training Centre, set up in 1986 to provide gender-sensitive training in group management, legal literacy, health and sanitation, accounting, project planning and budget, and social development. Taking into account the evaluation report's recommendations, Saptagram plans to increase its field staff over the next three years to maintain a ratio of 1 staff to 15 groups.

### **Moving Towards Self-sufficiency**

Saptagram field staff members act as advisors to groups, helping them in the aim of giving women greater control over their lives. Saptagram's ideal is for women to gain enough knowledge, skills and strength to do without the organization, and continue its work on their own.

"The women who have chosen to be part of a Saptagram group have shown persistence, courage and determination by maintaining their

membership and resisting the oppression of their families and the community", writes Inez Gibbons. "They have demanded changes in their social status and improved their economic conditions." But the 1992 evaluation warned that insufficient attention had been given to group dynamics. Different levels of commitment from group to group, and among women of the same group, highlighted the difficulty of maintaining homogeneity. Difficulties with savings and loans are one of the commonest causes of a group's break-up. Sometimes the loan does not equally benefit all members. In one extreme case cited in the evaluation, male relatives forced their wives or daughters to take loans which they used for their own consumption. A lack of expertise in maintaining accounts, fluctuating market prices and the absence of proper staff supervision can combine to break up a group. While Saptagram hopes the extension of literacy classes will help women keep better accounts, it also plans to reinforce credit supervision over the next three years by improved staff training.

A group's solidarity is enhanced by work-shops at the centres and regional offices. The themes of these workshops which range from legal, literacy, preventive health care, leadership and management, specialized technical training are usually the outcome of discussions in the villages. Once a month, group members send a representative, on a rotational basis, to one of these seminars at the Saptagram centre. These meetings bring women from different villages together, often for the first time. Discussions, sometimes with over-tones of 'group therapy', make women aware that they face similar problems and can jointly seek how to overcome them. The staff serve as facilitators. In 1992, a total of 155 seminars and work-shops involved 6,715 members.

Some group members emerge as leaders and take over many of the field staff's functions. Saptagram estimates it takes about five years for a group function independently. Rather than wait for field staff to come to the village, they will go to their closest centre for information and advice. Cooperation between these mature groups — ones that have undertaken a successful economic venture, participated in social actions and followed the literacy classes — has started in a number of villages with formation of village or *gram* committees. Members of these are 'graduated' group

members with leadership qualities. Saptagram gives them training in group management, micro-enterprise, and education. There are 27 gram committees with the participation of 178 groups and 50 villages. They are the base of a federation with an apex, rising from the village to the union and district community levels. This federation bulding is meant to further women's self-reliance. With the help of functional literacy and economic programmes, Saptagram believes the groups will ultimately be strong and sufficiently knowledgeable to control their future... without Saptagram.

### **Saptagram's Impact: The Value of Time**

*"Can you really fight the whole society, Chachiamma? I somehow do not think you will win. This social order has been there for thousands of years, like an old banyan tree which has stretched its roots deep into the earth. Storms will not be able to uproot it. The only way is to cut the tree down. Can you do that?"*

These are the words of a group member, Lily Begum, included in a book of forthcoming case studies collected by Rokeya Kabeer over 15 years. They reflect the enormous task Saptagram has set itself. Such an organization could not have overcome the huge obstacles of rural tradition without the vision and commitment of a leader who has put all her influence and energy into building Saptagram. "No one else could have done it", stresses Eva Joelsdotter Berg from SIDA.

To measure Saptagram's impact in facts and figures is hard, if not impossible, due to the lack of comprehensive studies. A study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) estimates that target group households get at most 20 per cent of their income from involvement with Saptagram. According to Saptagram's 1992 annual report, "most of the group members confess that while previously they would sometimes have to go without food for days, they now at least have two square meals a day."

There is, however, another dimension to change that demands more intimate knowledge of the country, and of the great ambivalence of

relationships in rural society. One report talks about 'an air of confidence' projected by women who are firmly committed to Saptagram. Working within the parameters of a strict Muslim society, some of Saptagram's boldest inroads can be summarized as follows:

**Gaining initiative:** Many NGOs working in Bangladesh are struggling to deal with a 'dependency mentality' on the part of recipients. Saptagram has been prone to lose members who have moved to other NGOs offering individual loans, quicker access to credit or free food rations. It is where Saptagram goes beyond a poverty alleviation project towards perceiving its mission as a much vaster project to make women agents of change. For this to happen over the long term, Saptagram believes that a 'consciousness-raising' process is essential. This takes time, requiring patience and extensive discussion that are not necessarily poverty's most obvious allies.

/ **Breaking out of isolation:** Coming out of the home to meet with their group and travelling to centres for seminars and workshops is revolutionary in a country where the ideal is female seclusion. This has favoured development of a network among women, the cornerstone of a broader women's organization. "Women have learnt what it means to be members of a network. They can support each other within their families", says Ms. Joelsdotter Berg of SIDA. "This mobilization factor is the major strong point."

**Becoming a visible financial provider:** Women have started to earn respect by playing a role on stages that were once terra non grata, such as selling goods in the market, leasing and cultivating land, and in some cases using modern technology. Trying to give women some control over resources and turning them into decision-makers avoids succumbing to welfare biases often contained in programmes working with women. The more experienced groups are planning micro-enterprises to provide jobs and produce goods from local materials. This partly stems from the emphasis on capital formation from the moment of the first loan.

**Letting women decide:** Saptagram has been able to back down when its assumptions proved wrong. Education is the most telling example.

Initially shrugging at the need for education, women eventually demanded classes. Faced with an injustice, women realized that literacy and numeracy were crucial tools that could be used to defend their rights and improve living standards. When they found that the curriculum portrayed them in traditional situations, running against the grain of group discussions, they once again confronted Saptagram with the need to develop a 'gender-oriented' syllabus.

**Linking education to economic betterment:** Part of the adult education programme's success comes from women's perception that it can improve their living standards. This underlines the importance of tying education to broader rural development, specifically income-generating projects.

**Uniting for change:** Women have understood the strength to be gained from unity through their success in confronting injustices. "When women become conscious, they become political", says Kabeer. Group saving and cooperative loans have also strengthened ties between women, increasing their sense of initiative and ultimately giving them greater control over their lives.

**The ripple effect of discussions:** Through 'awareness-building', women have jointly stood up to injustice and started to see the future in another light. "In the beginning, we would have married off our daughters when they were very young, now we don't", says one group member, reflecting the benefits of 'awareness-building' discussions. Similar reactions crop up with regard to work outside the house, family planning and education, especially of girls.

**Field staff dedication and creation of role models:** Strong bonds are sealed in Saptagram, which has not been spared the clashes inherent in a relatively small and dynamic organization with a political vision and a charismatic person at the top. Yet, there is very low staff turnover. "We have worked in the project for so many years", says one field worker, "That it has become part of us. We would manage somehow, even if Saptagram didn't pay. We are completely involved with the women's lives, their joys and sorrows. We truly want to make them independent. We will never agree to work elsewhere. We are like a family."

### **Challenges and Perspectives for the Future**

The next years are vital for Saptagram. Born of the vision of one women, Saptagram is fine-tuning its programmes by investing in better management at senior level and increased supervision of credit at field level. Rather than expand to other parts of the country, the organization has chosen to consolidate its experience in their regions it knows best: "It takes too long to fight power back in the village", reflects Kabeer. "It would also be impossible to maintain the intimate relationship amongst groups and staff if we worked at the national level."

This notion of time is central to Saptagram's movement for which change can only come from awareness. It is also a difficult notion to espouse in one of the world's poorest countries, where daily survival takes precedence over a longer-term vision.

A report by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies on poverty notes that increase in the income of poor households are constantly affected by extreme vulnerability to crisis (natural disaster, illness, etc.). In its aim to make women self-reliant, Saptagram has to remain attuned to the needs of the most deprived while ensuring more mature groups act as agents of change in their community.

Saptagram must continue to build on its expertise and strength as a women's organization to become a reference point in Bangladesh's competitive NGO world. This is beginning to happen: women leaders of Save the Children/USA's women's savings groups are participating in leadership and management training organized by Saptagram. This is first for both organizations. "We hope to continue working together, sharing ideas and encouraging exchange visits", says Elke Krause, a Save the Children representative.

Similarly, the education programme is of great interest to other NGOs seeking to better integrate adult literacy into their women's programmes, since its impact can be important: "The education programme also forms an excellent basis for other development activities, including employment, health and wider political participation", says OXFAM's Mark Goldring. At national level, adult education programmes

will become more important. The government has prepared a \$4.7 billion 'National Plan of Action for Education for All' that includes a three-year mass education project. Functional literacy and continuing education programmes for adults, particularly for women, are to be established. Existing programmes will be evaluated and literacy centres created in each village by 1995. Saptagram could have input into this drive to reduce illiteracy, especially among women. One of the organization's most valuable insights is that literacy programmes work when women ask for them. It is harder to create and maintain motivation when such programmes are not integrated into a large development project (income-generating activities, for example).

Economic changes are also pushing more and more women towards towns, a new terrain of work for Saptagram. "If women do not have a basic knowledge of how they will be exploited when they get out of the house, they will be in an inferior position. They need to network", says Eva Joelsdotter Berg of SIDA, stressing the need for adult education. "This is where Saptagram can do wonders." Part of Saptagram's future strength lies in its capacity to identify and open up new job opportunities for women, in which they will earn a reasonable income. The Silk Production Centre is a good example of this capacity.

"Our programme is a survival kit, says Kabeer." Women must be organized to defend themselves against exploitation. Saptagram's ongoing challenge is to maintain Professor Kabeer's fundamental and courageous vision of leading the poorest women forward while remaining alert to changing needs, demands and trends in the course of this transformation.

# 8

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROJECT

### Introduction

A long the Nile, in Upper Egypt, stand the cities of Assiut, Qena and Sohag. From their busy markets, rushing traffic and street salesmen rises a deafening noise. Beyond the city walls, however, lies a different, silent world—the desert. Here the immense, arid landscape is only broken by the occasional dune or cloud of dust. Then suddenly there is a burst of green, a field around a house or hamlet. The Nile through canals and irrigation has brought life to the dryness. Donkeys pass with baskets of produce. Children gather around wells. Each field is hive of activity with whole families weeding, ploughing and cultivating.

Despite this apparent greeness and fertility, many such hamlets or “ezbah” have remained untouched by the changes affecting modern Egypt. Income remains low, conditions harsh and the villages often lack basic amenities. Yet slowly with the arrival of the newly established “community schools” (small schools in the community with teaching by young women from the village or area), the seclusion is ending. The villagers’ confidence is coming to light. Material goods and riches are not their priority. As they themselves say “education is more important than electricity in the village. Electricity will only illuminate our roads and houses but education will illuminate our mind.” As the community schools spread, bringing change, the villagers see that learning opportunities exist within the hamlet and they need not depend on the outside world. The desire for learning has always been there but there was never a chance to express it. As one elderly man from Helba, a hamlet in Manfalout, in the

governorate of Assiut says "we wish all the girls, women and men of the village would get an education, but we cannot afford it nor can we allow our girls to go to far places on their own". Now there is an opportunity and it is by creating that chance that the community schools are now reaching the smallest hamlet and the most deprived.

Education is without doubt a valuable asset for the Egyptian poor. Since the sixties the Government of Egypt has made great strides to universalize basic education through large investments and by making education compulsory and free. However, despite this concerted effort, the goal of "duration for all" has not been reached. Squatter settlements in rural areas and on the outskirts of cities have been gradually expanding without educational services. Many groups of the population, particularly rural girls in the "*ezbah*", are also increasingly marginalized from education. This phenomenon, until recently, has not been accurately recorded but it is now estimated that up to twenty five per cent of the total population may live in many such small rural or peri-urban communities where services including education are often absent. So when UNICEE the United Nations Children's Fund, came to establishing health and sanitation programmes in Upper Egypt it discovered that some of the settlements they surveyed were unimaginably deprived. The Government, however, had tried to reach these groups in the seventies with small multigrade schools. These had quickly spread and some two thousand were established but the problem was far from resolved. Indeed, as the population increased along with the economic difficulties, these small school couldn't cope with the great influx of pupils and the changing needs of the job market. Schools came to suffer from teachers' low qualifications, lack of training and minimal learning materials. Soon the rate of absence of both teachers and pupils increased and the number of schools declined until the initiative gradually disappeared. So when the community schools came to the "*ezbah*" they started from scratch and in villages with no key services.

### **The Situation**

It is estimated that in the adult population, only sixty two per cent of males and thirty eight per cent of females are literate. According to

Nader Fergany in a recent UNICEF "Survey of Access to Primary Education and Acquisition of Basic Literacy Skills in Three Governorates in Egypt", the literacy rate for women can in fact be as low as ten per cent in Mallawi in Elminya province (government). Moreover of those who are in school, some 250,000 drop out each year. Estimates by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) have indicated that there could be as many as 800,000 girls out-of-school (6-15 yrs) and Fergany in the UNICEF survey gives the figure of 600,000 (6-10 yrs). It is certain, however, that there are also vast regional disparities with pockets of out-of-school girls in urban areas such as Cairo and Alexandria and in remote rural areas like the "*ezbahs*".

Egypt is one of nine countries targeted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF for special focus in implementing the world-wide effort to provide "Education for All". It contributes over thirty million people to the world total of illiterates, and each year adds more than a quartermillion to that number. The evidence regarding progress in primary enrolment rates is as diverse as the figures for out-of-school children and this is due to a problem of accuracy and availability of data. USAID and UNESCO figures seem to indicate that improvements in enrolment rates have been achieved in recent years. Yet the latest UNICEF data indicate that the expansion of access and participation in primary education has stagnated since the mid-1980s. At the heart of the "access problem" are the large regional and local variations in addition to socio-economic and cultural variations. National statistics for 1992 indicate that enrolment rates for boys in most governorates are in the order of in-eight per cent whilst for girls they stand at eighty-five per cent. However, the figure drops in many rural areas, particularly in Upper Egypt. Data from a national household survey indicate that while in rural areas of Lower Egypt, the school attendance ratio for girls is seventy-eight per cent, in Upper Egypt villages it can vary from sixty-five per cent to fifty-seven per cent in remote "*ezbahs*". Even within rural areas there are vast variations. In many hamlets less than fifteen per cent of girls go to school.

Data have largely focused on access but also on a qualitative level the education sector is faced with problems:

- Only 30 per cent of pupils in primary school attend full day schools.
- About 48 per cent of primary schools have two shifts.
- Classes have, on average, forty-five pupils with some urban schools reaching hundred pupils per class. The teacher/pupil ratio is one to forty-five.
- Drop out and repetition rates are estimated to be 25 to 35 per cent.
- Existing school buildings are insufficient with an estimated shortage of 5,911 classrooms. They are also in bad condition.
- Teachers are not qualified enough. They're poorly trained and their numbers fall short of the required number for primary education by at least 5,000 teachers overall.
- Acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills is low, particularly in arithmetic. More importantly, competency in basic literacy skills is estimated to have been declining since the late 1980s.
- Teachers, in the majority of classrooms, rely on rote and teacher centered methods.

For some time now, the Government of Egypt has been striving to improve education in the country. The budget for education has been gradually increasing and commitment to education is strong at all levels. The education of girls is particularly cherished by the current First Lady of Egypt, Mrs. Mubarak. She has insisted on its importance and declared it to be Egypt's top priority. The Minister of Education, at the New Delhi EFA Summit in December 1993, too placed priority on girls' education. The UNICEF Education Section's strategy has also been directly focused on the girl child and its aims and desire were fertile ground for the very concept of community schools which stress girls' access to schools and education.

The Government of Egypt's major education reforms since 1986 have been aimed at improving the quality, availability and efficiency of basic education throughout the country. In 1991, a new organization, the Agency for the Eradication of Illiteracy, was established. This was then enhanced by a five year plan (1992-1997) to achieve universal primary education and, in so doing, improve the quality of learning. Children would no longer be fed information, and education would be a means of developing skills for critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Again the emergence of the community schools coincided with these principles.

### Joining Forces

In 1992, UNICEF signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education (MOE). This contract stipulated that the UNICEF Education Section would design, develop and co-ordinate a community school model in deprived hamlets of rural Upper Egypt. The objective was to achieve "Education for All" by concentration on the areas of greatest resistance, the least serviced and most remote areas - the "*ezbahs*". The project would, in accordance with Ministry of Education's policies, emphasize the following:

- Ensure that each child has access to school (especially girls).
- Encourage self-help and non-governmental sources for providing and maintaining educational buildings and furniture.
- Select facilitators/teachers from the local and surrounding community to support self-learning, pupil-centered active learning and ensure pupil commitment and attendance.
- Provide new models of strong and supportive management for school facilitators/teachers and strengthen teachers' knowledge, skill, pedagogic practice and class management capacity.
- Emphasize the development of children's critical thinking and problem solving skill as opposed to rote memorization.
- Continually adapt the curriculum to suit children's learning needs, preferences and inclinations.

The model would evolve in three phases. The first phase designated as the "pilot phase" would set up four community schools to develop the system and training strategy. The second "development phase" would test the school for sustainability and the potential for achieving the spread of "Education for All". During this phase some twenty four schools would be set up. Finally during the "expansion phase" the project would move on to one hundred sites in preparation for national scaling. By then a sustainable system would have developed to allow the initiative to grow gradually.

There were four main criteria for site selection:

- sites should coincide with settlements of populations ranging from 1,500-2000 inhabitants,
- the site should be at least two kilometres away from the nearest existing school.
- there should be no less than fifty out-of-school children in the village,
- the community should agree and be eager to participate in the provision and management of the school.

The roles and responsibilities envisaged by the partners in the project would then be divided; the Ministry of Education would be responsible for the payment of facilitators' salaries, the provision of books and participation in the training of facilitators. One year after the signature of the agreement the project would become eligible for a school feeding programme (fortified vitamin biscuits) of government regular schools with medical check-ups for the children. The local communities in the hamlets were to be responsible for providing adequate space for the schools, managing them and ensuring children came to classes. In each site selected, an education committee from the local community would be created to bring together generations and genders of differing socio-economic status. This committee would act as a school board. It would make all management decisions concerning the school and would be responsible for making the school curriculum relevant to the local

environment. Finally the committees would nominate facilitators to be trained. UNICEF's major role was to train the project team and facilitators and implement the project through local non-governmental organizations at governorate level. It would be responsible, also, for the provision of school furniture, equipment and materials. Children would not have to pay fees nor would their families have to be burdened with expenses such as uniforms, whether in direct or hidden costs. Nonetheless, many families would have to sacrifice time spent in the field to allow children to study, so school hours were to be flexible enough to allow children to continue with both their agricultural and house chores. Graduates from this particular schooling system would acquire a basic school certificate at the end of the cycle just as with government school. They would become eligible for government exams at the end of the third and fifth grades. Meanwhile because of the schools' multigrade nature, advanced and older children would be able to combine the syllabus of two years in one.

### Sowing the Seeds

So facing enormous and daunting problems but with the strong desire to reform and improve school access in rural areas, the actors of the project began to explore the possibility of advancing into, what seemed to be, strong "pockets of resistance". The aim was to establish a schooling programme that would reach those who had, so far, remained unreached. This initial stage was not easy. It entailed the creation of partnerships between both the deprived communities and local government officials. Without these two critical elements the project was never going to succeed. At the initial phase it was obvious that a kind of "community school" idea was emerging, however whether it would indeed be a "community center" or "school" was still to be determined. Finally it was decided that it would be a community school with similar aspects to a community centre since activities and services would centre on the school.

During the first weeks partnerships were developed with communities through frequent and extensive travel around Upper Egypt. Villagers were, at first, reticent and although models of community schooling were not alien to the Egyptian countryside, the project group did meet with some hesitation when it came to donating land and space

for a school. The younger male community members were also taken aback by the idea of an educated wife. "An educated wife" said a young unemployed university graduate from the Mazani hamlet, "would only give one headache and ask too many questions". Often the argument was turned around and enveloped in traditional thinking: "No, she would be a better companion, care for you and the children in an enlightened way and she would even cook better!" Paradoxically, some younger villagers appeared to be far more traditional than their elders. In fact, the team had to make use of the elder generation to start making some headway. There were of course moments of despair, as with all far-reaching programmes when rival families with "vendettas" opposed the donation of land. However, the team battled on and in June 1992 they convinced four communities in Manfalout, Assiut, to participate in the project. UNICEF knew from experience and the example of the governmental Colombian "Escuela Nueva" programme what kind of role and partnership with the Government was required at local level. Moreover it was the community school designers' firm belief that partnerships had to be genuine and respected at all levels if responsibility was to be shared.

Weeks were spent with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF officials working out the details of the project. Various hurdles remained. For example it was argued that although "pilot projects" might work, that didn't necessarily mean they were sustainable. Furthermore the idea of using para-professional teachers or facilitators raised many doubts. In fact the very notion of a facilitator seemed so strange that it almost caused derision.

On the 29 April 1992, the memorandum of understanding between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education was signed. Not only did the understanding stipulate that roles and responsibilities should be shared but soon Ministry middle range staff became involved in the actual operationalization of the project. In the month of June a training programme for the first nine facilitators, three managers and supervisors was developed. An excellent trainer, Said Haykal, the Director of the National Basic Education Planning Unit, was assigned to the project by the Ministry. He spent a great deal of time participating in the in-service

training, selecting new sites, examining new facilitators, convincing the communities and planning the expansion phase. The partnership between UNICEF, the Ministry and the communities began taking shape. Support from the Ministry was constantly forthcoming.

To ensure a true level of success the project had formed its first team by carefully selecting a group of well-trained and experienced extension workers who had worked on various UNICEF supported community, health and sanitation projects in Upper Egypt before. They were devoted people who were challenged by the idea of becoming initiators of change. The whole spirit of the project was one of experimentation, exploration and participation. Intensive training was the cornerstone of the initial phase and much mobilization and commitment were needed to spur on the movement.

### The Project in Action

The project began in the governorate of Assiut with four schools with two facilitators each and one reserve or rotating facilitator. The term facilitator is more appropriate than teacher in the community schools as these young women are in the schools precisely to facilitate learning rather than impose a strict method of teaching.] Of the original facilitators in the classrooms, eight were paid by the Ministry of Education, whilst the ninth facilitator was considered to be a trainee and the responsibility of UNICEF. Through an NGO, the Integrated Care Society in Assiut, the project was provided with one technical supervisor, a field supervisor and a project manager. Each member of this core team was coached to become a leader or trainer when the project spread. The first facilitators were both guides and on-the-job trainers for the new comers as the project expanded. So newly-chosen facilitators observed the classrooms in operation and then paired off with an older and more experienced facilitator.

An Education for All (EFA) conference was later held in Assiut at the same time as the opening of fifteen new schools. The project had by then a total of twenty-five community schools in Assiut and Sohag. Some 150 participants representing international donors, Ministry of Education officials, the Social Fund for Development and governorate high officials

were invited. Study tours for Ministry of Education and interested governorate officials were organized. These guided visits lasted a week and gave participants and insight into the project and area. a documentary film on the project and a pamphlet were prepared. The film had been planned from the initial phase and, therefore, the shooting was done gradually and consciously.Meanwhile material for distance training was developed during the numerous pre-service and in-service training sessions.

Subsequently, partnerships and networks expanded. the project moved to other governorates and new NGOs were added: the Sohag Community Development Association for Women and Training, and the Qena "Tahssin Al Seha". Meanwhile Faculties of Education in Assiut, Sohag and Qena contributed to the training programmes of the project. MOE governorate departments also joined in actively in the training sessions but more importantly they became periodically involved in the actual monitoring of the schools with visits and reports. The National Centre for Educational Examination and Evaluations, through an agreement signed with the project, took on some of the formal assessment of the pupils. The Centre for the Development of Small Scale Industries, linked to the Department of Production Engineering at Ain Shams University began an experimental programme with German GTZ (*Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*) to produce plywood out of compressed palm tree twigs. It consequently signed a contract with the project for cheap wood to produce furniture. The convergence of other services in the community school sites was then envisaged so health posts, water and sanitation services, literacy, early childhood development activities and opportunities for income generation could become part of a general development plan.

### **Training the Community**

During the first training workshop in 1992 three days were spent observing and interacting with children from a local orphanage and facilitators elaborated a kind of "Project Charter" which later served as the basis for a facilitator guide. The first training session termed "Orientation", emphasized the development of a team spirit, knowledge

of the project philosophy, pupil activity techniques, child development, the facilitator's role and experience. The second referred to as "Active Learning", was more specific and underlined learning techniques in the various subjects: arithmetic, language, general knowledge and science. The final and third pre-service session termed "Constructive Classrooms", focused on class management and discipline. In 1995 a new training session was added under the title "Group Dynamics" with the aim of enhancing facilitators' communication skills, ability to function in group and pairs, and to develop problem-solving skills.

Much of this effort was directed at the training of trainers. So as faculty of education staff joined the community school training sessions, they were actually being trained in the process. The continuity of the training process was therefore ensured.

**Reporting:** a system of reporting was developed with clear field, management and technical descriptions detailing the functioning of the project, the status of new sites, the children's performance and facilitators' training. To these are added surveys to give information on the size of a site settlement, proximity to nearest school, number of children in government schools in the area, number of children in community schools or willing to enroll and finally out-of-school children by age and sex. There is also a more complete profile on each child including parents' name, family size and description, health condition, appearance and the child's skills, abilities, interests and expectations upon entry. Both these surveys and child profile are completed before school begins. This helps the project to give priority to expansions within a same site before moving to a new one. This system aspires to achieve UPE (Universal Primary Education) in each site just as a health mopping system would achieve absolute immunization in a single locality.

### **Innovative Strategies**

**Delivery:** even if community schools operate within the formal education system, the method of delivery, however, is far from formal. Classes are situated in far from formal. Classes are situated in available space easily accessible to the communities. Facilitators are recruited

locally, and being para-professionals with minimal or no experience in teaching, they are intensively trained. Access to school is totally free with no hidden costs. Classes are held at convenient times allowing children, and girls in particular, to meet the requirements of family work, hence decreasing opportunity costs. Communities are fully involved and engaged in the planning and management of the school giving them a sense of responsibility and ownership. Children are, for the first time, given the chance to receive quality education and are even able to join regular government primary or preparatory schools once they have attained the learning objectives of the curriculum.

**Techniques employed:** supported by intensive training, facilitators have managed to apply relevant pedagogical methods in the classroom. They have introduced children to learning through art, songs and games in an attractive way. Children have developed skills for selflearning and peer teaching. Creativity, planning, problem-solving and active learning have become a reality in the classroom. Classes are friendly, lively and animated. Furniture is designed in ways to allow for mobility, flexibility and creativity. Imaginative materials and equipment are used as learning aids. Children are not burdened by homework but work individually or in groups during class hours. The official curriculum is enhanced by subjects and activities best suited to the children's and community's interest such as health, environment, agriculture and local history. Children have their own school backyard where they experiment with agriculture, planting seeds or picking fruit. Oral histories have been reconstructed with the help of the elders in the community and children join the facilitators in writing and decorating a classroom book.

The school's daily schedule is organized around the principles of self-learning, planning and reviewing. The classroom is divided into learning areas (arithmetic, Arabic, general knowledge, science and art). The maximum number of children per class is thirty with two facilitators. The sequence of the day is generally the following: morning greeting with exchange of news, pupil planning time, individual/group activity time, review by the pupils of daily activity and evaluation, break with a snack and time for prayer group lesson and finally play time. Children then go home leaving their books behind in their cubby holes. Once the

children leave, facilitators meet to evaluate the day and develop their class plan for the following day.

**Convergence of development activities:** the project was designed to act as an entry point for other development activities. During the second year of the project, adult literacy classes began in all the sites through a set of women coordinators. These coordinators were from the sites themselves and were trained by an experienced NGO. By 1994, seventy adult literacy classes were established, with a ratio of two to each community school. At least ten of the communities have prepared space for health posts and await an input from the health sector at UNICEF. In one site an environmental bio-gas plant was set up through community participation. In yet another the members of the school committee built a grocery store and decided that fifteen per cent of the earnings would go towards the improvement and maintenance of their community school. The field team has encouraged these initiatives and wants the local committees of the schools to make their voices heard. This representation at village level can now reach highest governorate level. Through this new avenue to policy-makers, members of the committees of the community schools have managed to obtain pit latrines, cement or building materials for their schools, water pipes and sometimes even electricity and roads for their communities.

### A Community Facilitator

The training of facilitators comes in various stages. First, the community selects their new facilitators from young women in the area who have an intermediate certificate. They are also the women in the village who seem the most apt to deal with children. Their suitability, popularity and openness are all criteria. After an interview, in which the young woman's disposition towards teaching and children is discussed, a selection is again made. Four periods then ensue.

**Package 1:** The young women spend eight to ten days boarding together. For many this is the first time they have left their village or area. They are exposed to the outside world, learn from others and are encouraged to develop a team spirit. Confidence building is the main

aim of this stage. The girls are introduced to the concepts of self-evaluation and child psychology. Communication skills are introduced through simple methods such as describing people and villages. Nonverbal communication is also shown to be a possible method of reaching children. The young women sit together, discuss and analyze what they have to give to the children. The emphasis on self-learning is introduced at this stage.

**Package 2:** The young women board again. This time teaching techniques are introduced. Active learning based on the self is described. The three R's, arithmetic, Arabic and reading are developed into teaching methods. Lively learning, creation of learning aids, and the use of the imagination are discussed in detail. Each section of the training is flexible so the trainers respond to the opportunities for change and development they perceive in the young women. Classroom routines are elaborated as is the wider role of the facilitator. Self-evaluation begins at this stage alongside the concept of multigrade teaching. facilitators, therefore, debate with trainers on how to respond to individual needs and different levels of ability.

**Package 3:** This includes two weeks to one month observation in the classroom but with guidelines. The new facilitators have to write a report where they comment on what they see, what they feel they would do, what they would change and how they feel a better service could be given.

**Package 4:** After these sessions comes the weekly in service training which takes place at local level. Here facilitators meet with their colleagues from the district and organize works plans for their schools. Every fortnight a meeting with the local community committee is held. If details on child psychology or expert health advice are needed at these meetings, the facilitators are able to contact the relevant authorities through the district supervisors.

### **Taking Root**

In 1993, the National Centre for Educational Examination and Evaluation (NCEEE), in coordination with facilitators and MOE supervisors prepared, administered and marked test for the pupils in the

first four schools. It was the opinion of MOE and NCEEE staff that every child in the community schools had completed grade one satisfactorily. Indeed the report indicated good class averages and high individual scores. The evaluators commended the facilitators' commitment and performance in multigrade classes. With the permission of district officials, the children then attended district formal exams in a government school. The children passed with flying colours and a hundred per cent success rate in all four schools, as compared to seventy-six per cent for government private school and sixty-seven per cent for government public schools. Even more impressive was the fact that the first of the whole district was a girl from the El Gezira community school. Meanwhile the descriptive report on the children's performance commended their good manners and behaviour.

Evaluations by school facilitators and supervisors are done daily and recorded on a weekly basis in the child's individual file. This assessment requires close observation and a relationship with the child. The student's performance in academic, social and emotional skills as well as the child's cleanliness and appearance are noted. Each week the facilitators focus on one skill they wish the child to develop and through constant attention they see if improvement has been achieved.

The community school model has convinced and caught the attention of high policy-makers. In 1993, the MOE announced the establishment of a "one classroom school" initiative modelled, in part, on the community schools. The initiative would begin with the establishment of 3,000 schools in rural hamlets. To ensure success, the "one room schools" were linked to the community school project through the creation of an Education Innovations Committee (EIC) bringing together the Ministry, education specialists and key members of the community schools project. This is perhaps the greatest impact of the community schools at governmental and national level and is a true sign of success for all involved.

Several donors have expressed interest in the community school initiative. In 1994 the UNICEF Education Section received a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) fund of one million US dollars, with the possibility of additional funding. Meanwhile the Social

Fund for Development (SFD) an institution set up through the World Bank and other donors as a social security net for poverty alleviation sent an intern in 1993 to observe the community schools for four months. As a result a project document called for the setting up of 150 schools along the same lines as the community schools. Twenty-five schools are currently being opened in Assiut governorate.

Significant results have appeared after three years of action:

- Total number of schools in place in 1994/95 = 38
- Total number of schools by end of 1995 = 125
- Female enrolment rate = 70 per cent
- Girls enrolled in government schools near the community schools = 12 per cent, girls enrolled in community schools = 35 per cent
- Facilitators unauthorized absence = 0 per cent
- Children's absence rate by 1995 = five per cent
- Only four children have dropped out of the programme since its inception. Of the 920 children in the schools, 736 are girls and 184 boys. There are 66 facilitators and 14 supervisors. Literacy activities in the villages now mobilize 1,580 adult learners and 67 literacy co-ordinators.
- The projections for 1996 are equally encouraging with 1,650 children enrolled (1,320 girls and 330 boys), 207 facilitators and 40 supervisors. With the adult literacy programmes the projections stand at 2,300 learners and 120 trainers.

### **Impact on the Community**

Although figures indicate that the project is on track what is much more important from a development perspective are the changes in attitudes at all levels. Generally the sense of shared ownership and participation is triggering creativity and initiative. The community schools are acting as catalysts for development and change. The values of

participation, democracy, the enhancement of women and girls, self reliance, organization and social justice are just some of the wider values and feelings growing. On a smaller village level, changes are happening daily. The district of Dar El Salam in Sohag governorate, for example, is notorious for the seclusion of girls and women. Girls are sometimes only allowed out of the house if disguised as young boys and women can at times, only be allowed out of the house on two occasions: upon marriage and upon death! The schools in this district have now not only attracted young girls but have allowed women to be on education committees and become facilitators. Fatma, a young and attractive facilitator has even publically declared that she would only marry a man who would not deprive her of her teaching or interfere with her work at school. A process of empowerment has begun. The facilitators almost all agree that the project has been instrumental in increasing their self-confidence. In one of her many letter, Tahany, a facilitator from Qena, explained that she had liked the project at first because of the management style but her emotions with time modified to a great vocational calling toward the children in her community and education in general. tahany, Hayam and other facilitators in the project from different governments now correspond on a regular basis. The girls learning in the school have also undergone a process of change: Freiga, a 12 year old in A1 Kom community school, had been promised in marriage to the son of a relative. She managed to convince her parents to delay the marriage and become engaged to the young man when she finishes her school in two years time. Nagwa from the Abou Risha school, who is a member of the local community school education committee, donated her own and her sisters' bedrooms to set up a school and now spends most of her time visiting families to convince them that schooling is the best solution for their children. The harshest punishment inflicted upon children by their parents, she says, is to deprive them of school.

Nassreya, a young women in the Saad Abou Gayed literacy class, was encouraged to learn to read and write by her young daughter attending a community school. Many parents like Nassreya have learnt to write a few basic words including their name from their daughters and sons. Families are now able to correspond with their relatives who have emigrated to the Gulf States for work.

A web of solidarity is also appearing. In Assar, a village in Sohag, children in one class discovered that a boy had stopped coming to school because his shoes were worn out. The class made a collection and bought their friend new shoes. A boy in Saad Abou Qayed recently cured from bilharzia says he will make sure he and other children never swim in the stream again. In another "ezbah" of Nagaa Helwan, facilitators have actually managed to bring members of two feuding families together. Finally, it has been observed in all communities that the children have gained in politeness and assurance.

On a more official level, local district chiefs have rendered the provision of any infrastructural services or other social services conditional upon the inauguration of a new school in their site. At the Ministry of Education, there is a strong feeling amongst high officials that the community schools should expand considerably. University professors who have been involved in the training now wish to conduct research on the schools through Assiut University and a close network of decision-makers and education specialists has been formed.

A steady increase in creativity has also been noticed at all levels. Each and every actor of the project has left her or his imprint and the implementation process was purposely participatory and flexible, leaving plenty of room for adjustment, creativity and initiative. For example, although a prototype for a daily class schedule was developed in 1992, after some testing and analysis, the Assiut field team decided to change it. Again in 1994, after some consultation an even more streamline schedule was implemented and it has proved to have done a much better job in coordinating the acquisition of basic life skills than the formal syllabus. The community schools have been fertile ground for innovations and new ideas are continually encouraged. Facilitators, in one case, came up with a fun and effective incentive system to encourage regular attendance. Each day a child is given a coloured coupon or badge for a full day's attendance. At the end of the month or week, the child with the largest number of coupons is given a prize - absence effectively decreases. Children and facilitators have, too, created committees for the organization of lively activities in the project and villages. Facilitators develop alongside the children, evolving new methods for better teaching

and trying to understand the causes behind children's poor performance and problems. The facilitators are slowly becoming vital sources of knowledge in the development and understanding of these remote communities.

### **Future Prospects and Change**

Despite the obvious success of the project, it is not without its problems and there is room for improvement. For example, the preparation of school space takes time and the final product is often of poor quality. Schools are built in local materials such as mud bricks, and whilst this is cheap, they are precarious especially since Egypt has recently been suffering from floods and earthquakes. As regards more technical and pedagogical aspects, the project needs to be mainstreamed with greater advocacy and linkages, but more importantly it needs to be affordable for the Ministry of Education. This will require greater capacity building and development of a local supervision system without a rise in costs. Costs are also going to need cutting down especially in term of furniture and materials. Furthermore, the community schools invest a great deal on training, development and supervision costs, whilst the "one room" government schools invest more on actual school buildings (40,000 LE per school or US\$ 12,000). Joint reallocations between the two projects as they integrate further could resolve many problems through a form of cost sharing.

In terms of training, quality facilitators are not always easy to find in these remote and deprived areas. Although a higher education degree is not required, selection criteria are going to have to remain strict to ensure quality. This means recruitment is slow and lengthy and often cannot meet the demand in school enrolment.

Community schools are, without a shade of doubt, making a significant contribution to "Education for All" in these rural communities but they have not solved the problem of universal participation. In the villages covered by the project there are still children in the six to twelve age group who are not in school (about twenty-three per cent of the total). Looking at it overall, the enrolment ratio in community schools is seventy-seven per cent for girls and twenty-three for boys but because of

the low enrolment of girls in government schools (a twenty-seven per cent gross enrolment rate) there are still twenty-seven per cent gross enrolment rate) there are still girls out-of-school in these communities (sometimes up to thirty-six per cent of the school-age girls). The impact of the schools on the communities is certainly positive. The opening of the schools has brought governors and other high officials to the "ezbahs", drawing attention to their needs and concerns. This contact between local government and the Ministry of Education is going to need reinforcing. At district level, it has, for example, been suggested that all primary school principals be briefed on the community schools.

The Ministry of Education, as mentioned, has announced its intention of establishing 3,000 schools of its own to serve small rural communities, particularly to reach those girls presently out of school. This has been directly inspired by the success of the community schools and the committee for the implementation of this policy has decided to use the facilitator training approach developed by the community schools programme. This kind of co-operation needs to continue at all levels.

UNICEF, too, needs to take advantage of the education opportunities it is creating to come in with more concerted health, water and sanitation projects as fast as it can. This requires an information system for the project and a database is currently being developed. The media have reacted positively to the programme and four accounts of the community schools have appeared on national television and newspapers. Finally the community schools should go beyond the primary elementary level and expand wherever possible.

Going to scale and expanding is, therefore, the real challenge of the programme and this is happening with the launching of the government "one room schools". This is a major opportunity for scaling. The two models are not identical and need a strong process of fusion to come closer. In an effort to bring about this mainstreaming and linkage between the community schools and one room schools, the Ministry of Education will use its Education Innovations Committee (EIC) to plan a linkage between the two types of small schools through a process of innovation. Part of the initiative is to tie up small schools around the

world and share experiences through international workshops and study tours. Evaluations of this venture have been positive so far and the Ontario Institute on Studies in Education (OISE) has produced a report on the workshop and activities related to the initiative. Members of the Ministry, community schools and "one room schools" have, accordingly, come up with a structure for future action. It consists of the following.

- Creating a department for small school at the MOE to include both projects.
- Networking the two projects through a newsletter.
- Developing joint planning and training for the two projects.
- Developing joint evaluations and assessment system for two projects.
- Organizing ongoing study tours and field seminars.
- Certifying the community school facilitator and allowing them to be formally appointed by MOE as opposed to being contracted.

Linking the two initiatives in numerous ways paves the ground for UNICEF modelling and government scaling of small schools for girls. For the time being, however, the programme will continue to expand as it is. A plan of action for urban areas is also being developed. This time the programme should be designed to cope with those group excluded from urban society and education, namely working children, street children, drop-out girls at home, children from poor suburbs and neighbourhoods or those with few school services.

As regards costs, development expenses should diminish gradually as the project grows. The initial sums had to be large enough to set up a reliable structure to ensure viability and efficiency. In terms of long term sustainability, the unit cost per community school needs to be shown in light of the cost of that of government schools. For the community schools, the average pupil unit cost in 1994, exclusive of development costs and transport, was in the order of 300 LE per annum or US\$ 86. This figure

is greater than the average government cost per pupil of 200 LE or US\$ 60. However, this difference does not take account of internal school efficiency as the multigrade system of the community schools means that the opportunity of combining two years in one, in fact, vastly decreases costs. The fact, too, that repetition rates are so far non-existent means that it is very cost-effective even at a higher cost than that of regular schools. Finally the average cost per annum for a single community school, exclusive of development costs and community participation, is in the order of 11,872 LE or approximately US\$ 3,500. Attempts are also being made to reduce certain costs for such items as furniture and transport. This is gradually being achieved by seeking less expensive raw materials for the furniture (using, as mentioned earlier, wood manufactured from palm twigs). The transport costs should also naturally be reduced as more and more facilitators and supervisors are selected for the sites or from neighboring hamlets. The intricate supervising system, now in place, will also be replaced by wider education committees in each site, thereby reducing supervision costs drastically.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to note that most children in the "ezbah", particularly the girls would never have had the chance to acquire an education had they not been enrolled in the community schools. In the same way, all the young women facilitators not only discover new vocations in teaching but also find employment, which would have otherwise been impossible to find. The long term future of the community schools lies in the creation of a strong and sustainable relationship between UNICEF, donors, the communities and the Government of Egypt. The universalization of education, the community schools have proven, can be achieved in the "ezbah" and other remote areas by directly involving the community. This doesn't just mean bringing the community into the schools, it means creating a relevant curriculum, listening to the needs of the population, developing teaching and learning methods adapted to the local context and more importantly sparking a deep movement of change and self-reliance. It remains to be seen whether the same model will achieve similar results in urban areas but what is sure is that the community

schools are fertile testing ground and seed beds for true reform and innovation in the quality of education and ever., it is hoped, real societal reform.

The true core of the community schools, then, lies in their capacity to bring about change through a true process of democratization, people's participation, critical thinking, survival skills and local initiative. The community schools are a real chance for the children of the "ezbah". They are putting responsibility and freedom of action back in the hands of the deprived.

# 9

## SHIKSHA KARMI PROJECT

### Introduction

The Shiksha Karmi Project was started in Rajasthan with the assistance of SIDA to revitalise and expand primary Education in remote and backward villages of Rajasthan. Its aim is to overcome two major problems of Primary Education with the support and participation of the community : (a) teacher absenteeism in schools located in remote and difficult areas and (b) poor enrolment and high drop-out of children, particularly girls.

The concept of Shiksha Karmi is based on the assumption that a change agent specially in the field of education can work effectively if he belongs to the same locality. This strategy is particularly important for remote and backward villages where it is very difficult for an outsider to stay or to be accepted. In such conditions educational qualifications appear to be of lesser importance than the teacher's willingness and ability to function as a social worker.

Launched formally in 1987 the project covers 940 schools in 57 blocks of 23 districts of Rajasthan. The total enrolment of children is over 95,000 out of which 21,000 are attending Prehar Pathshalas (school of convenient timings) at night. There are now 2205 Shiksha Karmis. Their teaching skills are regularly upgraded and their motivation sustained through special training programmes designed by Sandhan, a professional non-government organisation. Other NGOs have been associated with various aspects of the project in the field. The schools taken over by the

project are running regularly, enrolment and retention has increased substantially and educational attainments of the children have shown significant improvement.

As the Shiksha Karmi Project nears completion of Phase I and looks forward to the beginning of Phase II, it is time for introspection, reflection and analysis. While all the agencies and partners of the project can take justifiable pride in its impressive accomplishments everyone invited in the project are aware of shortcomings and try to overcome them with the same resolve, determination and openness which has characterised the project so far.

The basic concepts and strategies of SKP stand validated. Shiksha Karmis have earned the respect and recognition of the village community and their peers. A demand has been generated for expansion of the project to more villages in the remote interiors of Rajasthan. Yet there are miles to go. Efforts to narrow the gap between enrolment of boys and girls need to be redoubled. Improvement in the functioning of Prehar Pathshalas is an area requiring special attention during Phase II. It is to strain every sinew to attain the minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) prescribed at the national level to ensure that the products from our schools possess the knowledge and skills expected of them. Other challenges include balanced expansion with sustained quality ; decentralization of management, interface with Lok Jumbish and mainstream education.

SKP emerges from Phase I with self-assurance, confidence and pride. There is no doubt that the SKP shall overcome the difficult challenges ahead and succeed in its mission.

### Rajasthan and its Educational Scene

Rajasthan has a vast geographical area (342,239 sq. km.), one third of which is covered by the Thar desert and a substantial portion is inhabited by tribes. While the population is growing at a rapid pace it is widely dispersed, with about 30% living in hamlets situated at a considerable distance from villages. Rajasthan is known for its glorious history, chivalry, rich cultural heritage, colourful and warm people, legendary forts and palaces. however, the State is also characterised by

extreme social and economic backwardness reflected in rapid population growth, poor literacy rates, particularly among women, high infant mortality, and unfavourable sex ratio, low per capita income, inadequate network of roads and under-developed communication system.

The state of Rajasthan is located in the western region of India bordering with Pakistan on the west, the state of Utter Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the east, Punjab and Haryana in the north and Gujarat in the south. The state extends from 23.03 degree to 30.12 degree north latitudes and from 69.29 degree to 78.16 degree east longitudes. The geographical area of Rajasthan is 342,239 sq. kms. making it the second largest state of the country. The total population of the state according to the 1991 census is approximately 44 million (23 million males and 21 million women) as against population of 34.26 million (17.85 million males and 16.41 million women) in 1981. The sex ratio in Rajasthan has come down to 913 women per 1000 men in 1991 as against 919 in 1981. The infant mortality rate in Rajasthan (1991) is 77 as against 80 in the country.

The state comprises 6 divisions, 30 revenue districts, 237 community development blocks and 37,890 inhabited villages.

During the past forty-five years massive investments have been made in the socio-economic development of Rajasthan and impressive progress recorded. The State has benefited from an enlightened political leadership, people's participation in development programmes, and open and accessible administration which has come up with several innovative ideas and projects.

After independence, expansion of education was given priority which has led to substantial progress in number of educational institutions, enrolment and literacy rates. If we look back to the situation in the year 1950-51 and compare it with that of year 1992-93, it clearly indicates that there are 30,005 Primary Schools as compared to 4,336 in the year 1950-51, 9,615 Upper Primary Schools in year 1992-93 against 732 in 1950-51, 3,333 Secondary Schools against 28 in 1950-51 against 175 in 1950-51 and 1,089 Sr. Secondary Schools against 28 in 1950-51. The total No. of teachers in 1950-51 were 18,586 which has now increased to 2,23,482. The literacy rate for all persons in 1991 is 38.55 as against

9.95 in 1951, for male 54.99 against 14.44 and for women 20.44 as against 3.0 respectively.

Despite various efforts for educational development of Rajasthan the State continues to be one of the most educationally backward areas in India, particularly in regard to woman education. As compared to the All India literacy rate of 52% in 1991, the literacy rate in Rajasthan was about 39% with only Bihar having a lower literacy rate. Woman literacy rate in Rajasthan is less than half of that of India, the lowest in the country and as many as 34 percentage points less than the male literacy rate in the State. The gap between the male and woman literacy rates in Rajasthan has risen by 4 percentage points between 1981 and 1991. The situation in respect of the Scheduled Caste and the scheduled Tribes is worse, woman literacy among SC is 8.31% and among ST is 4.42%. Out of every 100 out of school children in 6-14 age group as many as 70 are girls.

Primary Education in Rajasthan is characterised by low participation, high drop-out rates and unsatisfactory scholastic achievement. The gross enrolment ratio in the State in 1991 was about 65.6 per cent (6-11 years age group), which was much lower than the national average of 75.9 per cent. Although there has been a decline in the dropout rate (I to V) during 1951-1991 from about 60 per cent to about 45 percent, the number of children not completing primary education is still very large. The percentage of enrolment of girls at the upper primary stage (11-14 age group) being 17.29 per cent is alarmingly low. The overall picture is that no more than 15 per cent of girls and 25 per cent of boys complete eight years of education before they complete 14 years of age. The ratio between primary and upper primary school is nearly 4:1. Approximately 6,200 revenue villages and about 20,000 small habitations do not have primary school facilities.

The major causes for Rajasthan's educational backwardness may be summarised as follows:-

- \* Social conservatism and rigidity.
- \* Difficult geo-climatic conditions.

- \* Neglect of education in the pre-Independence era.
- \* Insufficient educational infrastructure.
- \* Unsatisfactory quality of education.
- \* Non-involvement of village community in education.
- \* Centralised and unresponsive management structures.
- \* Lack of educational opportunities for women and disadvantaged sections of society.

The Shiksha Karmi Project is one significant innovative in the educational scenario in Rajasthan. It not only provides an effective strategy for redressal of the situation but also extends hope for the future.

### **Background**

The original Shiksha Karmi Project document was prepared by a joint Government of India/ Government of Rajasthan/ Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) Mission in September, 1986. A Revised version of the Project Document was prepared in September, 1987. A subsequent Addendum was brought out in 1991.

The Project Document described a six years SEK 52 million project, aimed at revitalising and expanding elementary education in about 2000 remote and socio-economically backward areas in Rajasthan. The problems sought to be addressed by the Project were:

- \* poor enrolment, particularly of girls;
- \* high drop out rate;
- \* teacher absenteeism; and
- \* poor local relevance of the curriculum.

The Project was based on an approach developed in Silora block by the Government of Rajasthan in cooperation with a voluntary agency,

Social Work & Research Centre (SWRC). The crucial innovation in the Silora block experiment and in this Project was the substitution of the primary school teacher by a team of two educational workers, "Shiksha Karmis" Unlike the school teacher in the Project village, Shiksha Karmi was a local person, living in the village.

The Project Document spelt out Shiksha Karmi (SK) concept, the philosophy and assumptions underlying the strategies of the Project, its major features and plan of operation. This Document formed the basis of the Agreement signed on October 19, 1987 between SIDA and Government of India (GOI) for taking up Phase-I of Shiksha Karmi Project from July 1, 1987 to June 30, 1991. The Sharing of expenditure between SIDA and Government of Rajasthan (GOR) was in the ratio of 9:1.

### Aims and Objectives

Consistent with the aims laid down for primary education in the "National Policy on Education 1986" and its Programme of Action, the aims of the Project were:

- \* universalization of primary education in remote, socio-economically backward villages in those blocks of Rajasthan State were the existing primary education had proved particularly ineffective;
- \* a qualitative improvement of primary education in such villages by adapting the form and content of education to local needs and conditions;
- \* achievement of a level of learning equivalent to the norm for class V to be achieved by all children in the Project villages with primary attention given to girls.

To promote these aims the objectives of Project were:

- \* to identify and train voluntary education workers from among the village community- Shiksha-Karmis who would be requested to run primary education day and/or night centres in selected villages;

- \* to establish, with the active involvement of Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and voluntary organizations, a training and support system adequate to sustain and promote the role of the Shiksha Karmis.

### Targets

The indicative targets for the I Phase of the Project were:

- \* to establish/ take over primary education schools in about 2000 villages in 140 blocks;
- \* to select, train and give continuous support to 5000 Shiksha Karmis;
- \* to provide supplementary primary education for about 800 woman Shiksha Karmi trainees;
- \* to provide 5 years of education, or its equivalent in the non-formal stream, to all children in all project villages.

### Strategies

The major strategies to achieve objectives and targets of Phase I of Shiksha Karmi Board (SKP) were as follows:

- (a) Establishment of an effective partnership between GOR, SKB, NGOs and voluntary organisations.
- (b) Training of project personnel, including all persons associated with project implementation at block, district and state level through agencies like SIERT Udaipur, SANDHAN Jaipur, the academic wing of SKB and other NGOs.
- (c) Selection of villages on the basis of remoteness, low or irregular teacher attendance low enrolment and high rate of drop-out. The willingness of the local community to assist in the Project implementation was to be regarded as one of the major conditions for the selection of villages.

- (d) Identification and selection of Shiksha Karmis with the active involvement of the local community. The personality and willingness of the selected Shiksha Karmi was to be given priority over his/her educational qualifications.
- (e) Training of Shiksha Karmis to achieve the fourfold objectives of:
  - (i) Upgrading their initial educational qualifications;
  - (ii) Continually improving and promoting their teaching ability;
  - (iii) Reinforcing systematically the solidarity among Shiksha Karmis so as to enable them to play the role of a social activist; and;
  - (iv) providing encouragement and support to them.
- (f) Substitution of irregular teachers in dysfunctional schools by two Shiksha Karmis who could take stock of the physical condition of the school, review the status of enrolment and attendance of boys and girls in 6-14 age group, conduct a survey of out-of-school children and establish contact with influential members of the community.
- (g) Running of Prehar Pathshalas (schools of convenient timings) (PPs) by SKs to suit the convenience and needs of children in 6-14 age group who are unable to attend day school.
- (h) Establishment of a support and supervisory system consisting of a Village Education Committee and a Shiksha Karmi Sahyogi (Local Supervisor) (SKS) for a unit of 15 schools;
  - (i) Provision of free-books, school bags, teaching-learning material and equipments to students in SK schools.
  - (j) Setting up of Mahila Shiksha Karmi Training Centres (MSKTCs) to provide supplementary primary education to literate, enthusiastic and committed women of Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) villages to enable them to work as SKs.

- (k) Development of innovative Teaching-Learning materials (TLM) suited to the needs of the local environment, local conditions and local needs.
- (l) Intensive review, participative monitoring and evaluation of Project activities through field visits of Block- level staff, monthly plan and review meetings at Block, Regional and State level and Joint Bi-annual Reviews by SIDA, GOI and GOR.

### **Experiments and Innovations**

The project provided sufficient scope and flexibility for trying out experiments and innovations to meet the educational needs of rural children. Efforts made towards this during Phase I included:

- \* Introduction of the concept of Aangan Pathshala (courtyard school) run by women SKs mainly for girls who are unable to attend to Day Schools and Prehar Pathshalas.
- \* Utilising services of elderly village women as 'Mahila Sahyogi' (Woman Escort) to accompany girls to schools in difficult areas and take care of their siblings;
- \* Integrating disabled children in SKP schools in two blocks.
- \* Establishment of new SK schools in unserved habitations.

### **Management And Review**

Shiksha Karmi Board was set-up as a registered autonomous body in October, 1987 for planning, implementation, coordination and management of the Project. The functioning of the Board is governed by the rules and regulations framed under the Societies Registration Act, 1958. The Project Document of September 1987, along with modifications made from time to time, formed the basis for implementation of the Project upto June, 1991.

The physical, financial and qualitative progress of the Shiksha Karmi Project from July, 1987 to June, 1991 was reviewed in the Joint

Mid Term Review held in January, 1991. While the qualitative achievements of the Project were appreciated, it was noted that the implementation rate had been slower than envisaged and that about 80% of SIDA's contribution was likely to remain unspent when the Agreement expired on June 30, 1991. It was agreed that the anticipated savings of approximately 35 million SEK be utilised by extending the Project upto June, 1994 on the basis of a fresh Project Document. In September 1991 an Addendum to the Project Document of September 1987 was prepared for a period of 5 years from July 1991 to June 1996. The anticipated savings of 35 million SEK were expected to suffice for the first 3 years i.e. 1991-94 Another Mid Term Review was envisaged in January, 1994 to decide on SIDA's commitment beyond June, 1994.

The Addendum of September 1987 identified the strengths and weaknesses of Shiksha Karmi Project on the basis of an analysis of its experiences during 1987-91. The Addendum stated that the essential features of the Project Document of September 1987 would continue to form the basis for implementation of the Project beyond June, 1991. However, it had become necessary to introduce certain changes in the Project design, to re-define physical targets and to re-assess costs. In this light the Addendum described the changes proposed to be introduced and the framework for implementing SKP beyond June, 1991. It was agreed that the SIDA and GOR would continue to share the cost to the Project in the ratio of 9: 1 upto June, 1994. On the basis of the Addendum and Agreement for implementation of the Project from July, 1991 to June, 1994 was signed between GOI and SIDA on march 22, 1991.

In the 9th Joint Bi-annual Review of SKP held in December 1993 the qualitative and quantitative achievements of the Project were appreciated. it was noted that, despite the rapid expansion, high quality had been maintained and that progress during the year 1991-92 was more than the total achievements during the initial years of the Project i.e. 1987-91. The Swedish delegation expressed its willingness to continue to support the Project on a long term basis beyond June, 1994. It was agreed that a Joint Working Group consisting of representatives of GOI, SIDA and GOR be constituted to elaborate a proposal for a new Project document for Phase-II of SKP. Accordingly a Joint Working Group was constituted

in September, 1993 to review the performance and impact of SKP during Phase-I and to make recommendations regarding Phase-II of the Project from July 1994 to June 1999.

The Joint Working Group submitted its report in November, 1993. The Group observed that an assessment of experiences during Phase I validates the basic assumptions of SKP. The report mentions that the quality of education offered by the Project's day schools is high. This quality has been achieved through judicious and controlled selections of Shiksha Karmi candidates and carefully designed training programmes. The schools taken over by Shiksha Karmi Project are now running regularly. Enrolment and retention is increasing. The educational achievements of the learners is good, as shown by the achievement studies carried out in 1990 and 1992. However the Joint Working Group expresses concern with regard to the uneven quality of Prehar Pathshalas. It emphasises the need to improve their functioning and to focus efforts on measures to improve the participation of girls in SK schools and PPs.

The report concluded that considering the financial and administrative resources available, a balanced expansion of SKP would lead to a doubling of the Project over the next 5 years in term of the villages covered and Shiksha Karmis engaged.

### **Review Of Phase-I of Shiksha Karmi Project**

In view of its ambitious nature, the inaccessible and remote areas in which it is sought to be implemented and the high operational risks involved in its implementation, Shiksha Karmi Project made a slow and cautious beginning. At the outset special attention was devoted to internalising the philosophy, concepts and strategies of the Project; dissemination and propagation of its aims and objectives; formulation of processes and structures; identification of NGOs and voluntary agencies as partners; and definition of roles and responsibilities of various agencies.

During the initial phase of SKP considerable time, effort and energy was expended in negotiations, dialogue and discussions with GOI, SIDA and GOR; obtaining necessary approvals and sanctions from the State Government; framing of Rules and Regulations; setting up of

headquarters; coordination with Panchayati Raj Institutions; recruitment and training of personnel.

Nevertheless the physical, financial and qualitative progress of Shiksha Karmi Project during 1987-91 was noteworthy. At the conclusion of the initial Phase of Shiksha Karmi Project, 28 units of the Project were operating in 26 blocks of 16 districts. The number of Shiksha Karmis engaged were 638 of which 587 were male and 51 women. Among them they covered 306 Day Centers and 511 Night Centers. During the period July, 87 to June, 91 about 35% of the non-school going children in Shiksha Karmi Project villages were enrolled in day and night centres and the participation rate went up from 51% to 76%. During this Phase four Mahila Shiksha Karmi Training Centres were set up, a monthly magazine entitled "SHIKSHA KARMI" was introduced and educational tours for Shiksha Karmis were organised.

An external evaluation coordinated by Institute of Development Studies (IDS) during August- December, 1990 revealed that the performance of Shiksha Karmi Project children was consistently better in the areas of literacy, numeracy and general awareness as compared to that of the children of nearby Panchayat Samiti (PS) schools. The study noted that the success of the Project activities during 1987-91 confirmed the desirability of Shiksha Karmi Project as a design of educational management to resolve the problems of teacher absenteeism, poor enrolment and retention of rural children, particularly in remote areas and where rural women were not involved in education.

The extended phase of Shiksha Karmi Project from July 1991 to the present has been a period in which impressive progress has been recorded in quantitative and qualitative terms. During this phase the basic philosophy and concepts underlying the project have been widely recognised and accepted; and effective partnership established between GOI, SIDA and GOR on the one hand and SKB, Panchayati Raj Institutions and NGOs on the other; appropriate effective processes and structures evolved, and a rigorous as well as participative monitoring, review and evaluation system put in place.

The physical, and qualitative progress made by Shiksha Karmi Project from July 1987 to December, 1993 may be summarised as follows:-

## **Physical Progress**

### *Coverage*

- \* Coverage of 940 villages in 57 Blocks of 23 districts.
- \* Selection, training and placement of 2205 committed and motivated SKs in 900 day schools, 2105 PPs and Aangan Pathshalas.
- \* 41% of SKs belong to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes which constitute 28.5% of Rajasthan's population.

### *Enrolment and Participation*

- \* A 300% increase in enrolment of children in the age group 6-14 years in SK schools and PPs i.e. from 30,000 at the time of take over under SKP to 94,705 at present.
- \* 21,092 children i.e. 22% are attending non-formal classes (Prehar Pathshalas); of these 13,163 are girls i.e. 62%
- \* Enrolment of children in the age group 6-14 years in primary education in SKP villages has improved significantly from 37% at the outset to 79% at present.
- \* Enrolment of boys has gone up from 50% to 88%, enrolment of girls has increased from 21% to 65%.
- \* More than 50% of the children in SK schools and PPs belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and 41% are girls.
- \* One of the outstanding achievements of SKP is 100% enrolment of children in the age group of 6-14 years in 111 villages; over 80% enrolment in as many as 377 villages and over 60% enrolment is between 50-60%.
- \* Monthly attendance of children in SK schools has improved from 58% to 84%.

- \* 61 SK schools, started in habitations, which were hitherto unserved by primary schools, are catering to the needs of 2463 children in 6-14 age-group.

#### *Community Support*

- \* SKP has constituted Village Education Committees (VECs) in 727 villages to promote community involvement in primary education and encourage village-level planning.
- \* Community support and participation has helped to improve the physical conditions and environment of primary schools taken over by SKP.

#### *Promotion of Girls Education*

- \* 7 MSKTCs which have been set up in interior rural areas are fully operational now. Of the 215 women presently working as Shiksha Karmis, 29 were trained at MSKTCs. Another 162 women are undergoing training to enable them to work as SKS in future.
- 40 Aangan Pathshalas in 3 blocks are providing primary education to 1627 children, of whom 1056 (65%) are girls.
- \* 73 'Mahila Sahayogis' (Women escorts) and 7 'Purush Sahayogis' (Men escorts) in 7 blocks are accompanying 1501 girls in SK schools and PPs. In day schools they also take care of siblings.

#### *Special Education*

- \* A pilot scheme to integrate disabled children in SKP schools has been launched recently in Ghatot (Tribal) and Balotra (Desert) Blocks. A survey has revealed that 6% of children upto 14 years of age in the two Blocks suffer from physical disabilities. So far 458 disabled children have been admitted in SK schools in these blocks.

#### **Assumed Physical Position as on June, 1994**

It is expected that at the end of phase I of SKP in June 1994 the Project would be extended to 1100 villages in 100 blocks. The number of Shiksha Karmis would be about 2500 and students enrolled in SK schools and PPs approximately 0.115 million.

## **Financial Progress**

During the initial four years of the Project from July, 1987 to June, 1991 the SKP received IRS 44.521 million from SIDA through GOI and IRS 3.209 million from GOR i.e. total receipts of IRS 47.73 million. Against this an expenditure of IRS 36.651 million i.e. 77% was incurred during this period. Day centres, Night centres and supervision accounted for a major share of the expenditure i.e. 66%.

The pace of expenditure picked up considerably during the extended phase of the Project. During 1991-92 and 1992-93 the expenditure was IRS (Indian Rupees) 66.063 million against receipt of IRS 61.038 million. As such the expenditure during the last two years was almost double the expenditure in the first four years.

The position regarding expenditure has continued to improve during 1993-94. The budget of IRS 76.726 million for the current financial year is more than the total expenditure incurred during 1991-92 and 1992-93. Upto December, 1993 expenditure incurred was IRS 25.354 million.

It is anticipated that by the conclusion of the first phase of SKP in June, 1994 the total expenditure would be IRS 210 million and savings of 35 million SEK at the end of June, 1991 would have been fully utilised.

## **Qualitative Progress**

- \* Expert studies reveal that academic attainments of primary school children in SKP areas are generally better than neighboring schools managed by Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- \* The imaginative and rigorous training programme has instilled confidence in SKs, improved their academic skills; and sustained their commitment to work.
- \* Adoption of child-centred, activity-based multi-grade teaching has made SK schools and PPs more attractive to children.
- \* SKP has been successful in eliciting participation of village community.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

An analysis of the experience gained during Phase I of the implementation of SKP, reveals strengths as well as certain weaknesses.

### Strengths

- a) SKP is the first educational project in Rajasthan to study to problems of out-of-school children in rural areas systematically and devise appropriate strategies for their enrolment and retention in primary schools.
- b) The key to the success of SKP is the Shiksha Karmi who acts as the change-agent. The Project has demonstrated that objective selection of local resident youths as Shiksha Karmis in consultation with the community makes a crucial difference in their responsiveness and their accountability. This as well as the sense of belonging of SKs who are seen as 'insiders' has contributed immensely to the regular and proper functioning of schools. Consequently the interaction between school and community stands reinforced.
- c) Partnership with NGOs in designing need-bases, recurrent and innovative training programmes for Shiksha Karmis has yielded positive results.
- d) SKP has devised an effective model for support, supervision and monitoring of quantitative and qualitative aspects of primary education.
- e) The management style of SKP has generated a work culture which is open, flexible, non-hierarchical, responsive, introspective and performance oriented.
- f) The provision of free textbooks, school bags and stationery; organisation of study visits; educational tours and tournaments have served as useful incentives in improving enrolment and participation in SK schools and PPs.

- g) The effective functioning of SKP has generated public demand for expansion of the project to more villages and upto the Upper Primary level.

### **Weaknesses**

- a) Despite impressive quantitative progress during Phase I of SKP, the initial target of taking over primary schools in about 2000 villages in 140 blocks continues to be elusive. Consequently the target for selection and training of 5000 Shiksha karmi and 8000 woman Shiksha karmis could not also materialise. Against an initial target of establishing 20 MSKTCs it has been possible to establish only 7 MSKTCs so far.
- b) The gap between enrolment of boys and girls continues to be a matter of concern.
- c) With respect to quality in education the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) prescribed at the national level have yet to be attained in SK schools and PPs.
- d) The uneven quality of PPs and their upgradation to the level of day schools is an area requiring special attention.
- e) While Shiksha Karmi Sahyogis have been effective in supervising and monitoring the quantitative aspects of SKP, the academic support provided by them is as yet inadequate.
- f) The problem of purchase and supply of teaching learning materials in time has not been completely overcome.
- g) Shiksha Karmi Board continues to follow Government rules in personnel and financial matters. In view of the special requirements of SKP and in keeping with the autonomy of the Board, it would have been preferable to frame separate financial and personnel regulations.

## Policy Implication Of SKP

The experience of implementation of Shiksha Project during the last 7 years has confirmed that its objectives, strategies, processes and programmes are appropriate for addressing the problems of universalisation of primary education in the remote and inaccessible rural areas of Rajasthan. The success of Shiksha Karmi Project has established that it as a viable para-professional alternative to traditional primary education which is relevant for the educationally backward areas of the country as well as in other developing countries. Shiksha Karmi Project is moving towards creation of a sustained, self-reliant system of village based primary education which could serve as a model for planning and management of rural primary education.

Shiksha Karmi Project represents a major step forward in the non-formalization of formal education with active involvement of the rural community. This is reflected in the success of the consultative and participatory processes for identification of villages and selection of Shiksha Karmis. While retaining the text books and curricula of the formal education system, Shiksha Karmis have been provided with sufficient flexibility for adaptation to local conditions and to enliven the teaching learning process by innovating, experimenting and making it a joyful and child centered activity. Shiksha Karmi Project makes a significant break from the traditional and routine supervision of primary schools. It provides support, encouragement and guidance to SKs and ensures their accountability to the local community. In contrast with the prevailing style of management of education, Shiksha Karmi Board has adopted a non-threatening and friendly approach to facilitate the achievement of Project objectives. SKP experience suggests that given adequate space and necessary support, an autonomous organisation created by Government is capable of providing bold solutions to age-old problems with the cooperation of other Government agencies, NGOs and people's participation.

Given the rapid and sustained improvement in participation, attendance and academic attainments of children in the age group 6-14 in SKP villages, Shiksha Karmi approach appears to be an effective and quick way to achieve the goals of universalization of primary education

in rural areas. The Project demonstrates, though on a limited scale, that Primary School participation can be improved irrespective of the economic conditions and social compulsions of parents. Its experience reinforces the belief, that in the given socio-economic circumstances non-formal education, such as provided by Prehar Pathshalas, is an appropriate strategy for universalisation of primary education.

The experience of Shiksha Karmi Project demonstrates that the motivation, of Shiksha Karmis working in difficult conditions can be sustained over a long period of time by recurrent and effective training; sensitive nurturing; community support; regular participatory review; and problem solving.

Shiksha Karmi Project has emerged as an unique instrument of human resource development. it has enabled rural youth with inherent talent and potential, to blossom into confident paraprofessionals with self-esteem, self-respect and dignity.

### **Challenges for The Next Five Years**

The Project's experience over the past six years has validated its basic concept. However, much remains to be done. The main issues for Phase II are: balanced expansion with sustained quality; decentralization of management; increased participation of women as Shiksha Karmis; improved enrolment and retention of girls in day schools and Prehar Pathshals; career opportunities for Shiksha Karmis; interface with Lok Jumbish programme and mainstream education.

### **Balanced expansion**

The future expansion of Shiksha Karmi Project would be determined by the need and demand for this approach; resources potentially available and the strengths of the participating agencies. Consideration would also be given to the expansion of the Education department's programmes/ schemes and interventions like Lok Jumbish Programme.

The need for Shiksha Karmi Project can be assumed as long as the basic problems remain. There are 33,005 primary schools in Rajasthan.

As many as 5,000 of them are located in remote villages. Many of them may have irregular teacher attendance and very low enrolment of children. In addition there are about 6,000 revenue villages without any school facilities. A suitable and viable strategy for provision of primary education to children of migrant communities is still to be evolved.

The success of the Project so far has created a great demand for more Shiksha Karmi units in existing blocks as well as in blocks not yet covered by the Project.

Quality in Shiksha Karmi Project means that schools and Prehar Pathshalas are running; that all children aged 6-14, including all the girls, are enrolled and retained; that the curriculum is relevant to the local conditions and that the children achieve a level of learning equivalent to the norm of class V. In most of the dimensions the Project has so far been performing very well. The challenge for the years ahead is to retain the high quality in the day-school through its current stage of very rapid expansion and to improve the quality of the Prehar Pathshalas.

During Phase I the financial resources available to the Project have been more than adequate. The Project initially grew slowly and its recurrent expenditure has been relatively modest. This is now changing. With its present extremely rapid growth, recurrent expenditure will, by mid-1994, amount to IRS. 97.4 million (about SEK 24.35 million) per annum. A continuation of the present growth rate (the addition of 60 villages and 140 Shiksha Karmis per month) over the next five years would result in an annual recurrent expenditure of IRS 548.4 million (SEK 137.1 million) by 1999. Such a rapid expansion has a high degree of operational risk. Considering the financial and administrative resources available, a balanced expansion would lead to a doubling of the Project (in term so villages covered and Shiksha Karmis Posted) over the next five years. This would result in an annual recurrent expenditure of IRS 248.51 million (SEK 62.12 million) by 1999.

### Decentralization

In Phase I of Shiksha Karmi Project, with a limited Project area, centralised management was possible. With the current rapid rate of

expansion it becomes imperative to identify, create and support decentralized units of management of Project activities. Such decentralized units i.e., Resource Units need to take over the responsibility of coordinating training, supporting educational activities and facilitating regular participatory reviews within specified geographical areas.

### **Mahila Shiksha Karmis**

The original Project document states that "Each village.....Should have two Shiksha Karmis in principle one woman and one male".

After six years of Project activities, around 8% of the Shiksha Karmis are women. The percentage has actually been decreasing over the past four years. Reaching a 50/50 balance by the end of Phase II would be unrealistic. Keeping the long-term objective of one woman and one male Shiksha Karmi in each village intact, the target for the end of Phase II would be set at an approximation of 25% women in the Shiksha Karmi cadre.

### **More Girls in Schools and Prehar Pathshalas**

A number of Shiksha Karmi villages now report that all children aged 6-14 are attending either day-school or Prehar Pathshala. This implies that all girls in those villages are now receiving primary education. In other Shiksha Karmi Project villages, the enrolment of girls is far lower than that of boys. Out of the total enrolment in the Project's day-schools and Prehar Pathshalas the girls account for about 30%. This clearly indicates that one of the major challenges for the Project over the next five years would be to enrol a higher proportion of girls.

### **Career Opportunities for Shiksha Karmis**

The number of experience Shiksha Karmis are gradually increasing and modalities for retaining this valuable resource in the Project and their subsequent absorption in the main stream educational system need to be worked out.

A Shiksha Karmi who has been actively associated with the Project for over 8 years has undergone over 400 days of training and has acquired

8 years teaching experience. For effective utilization of this human resource an attempt will be made to:

- \* evolve modalities for Shiksha Karmis' absorption/ association with main stream educational system.
- \* provide suitable honorarium package and social security benefits commensurate with the experience.
- \* explore possibility of Shiksha Karmis participation as Shiksha Karmi Sahyogies, Master Trainers, member of the Resource Unit/ Board/ Sandhan.
- \* support initiative for further studies by Shiksha Karmis to attain qualification up to secondary level through special coaching classes.

### **Interface with Lok Jumbish and Mainstream Education**

Lok Jumbish Project has a comprehensive agenda for educational management at the elementary level. Shiksha Karmi Project needs to enter into mutually strengthening dialogue with Lok Jumbish for sharing of insights, exchange of ideas and experiences, and pooling of resources as well as expertise.

Shiksha Karmi experience has provided new insights in teacher's training and support system for effective educational management. These experiences can be adopted to the extent considered feasible by the Education department.

### **FUNCTIONING OF DAY SCHOOLS AND PREHAR PATHSHALAS**

Shiksha Karmi Project is a very significant innovation in the educational scenario in Rajasthan. It not only provides an effective strategy for redressal of the present situation but also extends hope for the future.

SKP expanded gradually during its initial phase from 1987-91. This was necessary to avoid operational risks. The extended phase from 1991-94 has seen a more rapid coverage. Beginning with 13 villages of

Silora Block in Ajmer district in 1984, SKP has now expanded its area of activity to 940 villages of 57 blocks in 23 districts.

The expansion during the last year (1st April 1993 to 31st December, 1993) was as under:

<i>Coverage</i>	<i>Upto March 1993</i>	<i>Upto December 1993</i>	<i>Progress for the period April, 1993 to December, 1993</i>
No. of Districts	22	23	+1
No. of Blocks	51	57	+6
No. of SKP villages	763	940	+147
No. of schools (a) Taken over from PS	691	839	+148
(b) New schools opened in unserved habitations	31	61	+30
(c) APs	41	40	-1*
(d) PPs	1287	2105	+818

\* The Angan Pathasala (AP) at Bhuj in Jhadol block had to be closed due to the migration of MSK to another village.

During the last nine months 147 additional villages in 6 new blocks have been covered and one more district included under SKP.

### **Day Schools**

In the initial stage, SKP took over dysfunctional schools where the enrolment and retention were poor and the problem of teacher absenteeism acute. The existing teacher was replaced by two trained SKs. In the extended phase, SKP has also opened new primary schools in unserved habitations in remote and inaccessible areas.

### Functioning of Schools taken over by SKP

- (i) A survey conducted recently by field level functionaries of SKB provides the following data in regard to the functioning of SKP schools:

<i>Nature of Function</i>	<i>NO. of Schools</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Open regularly and punctually	706	100
Availability of Teaching-Learning Material	685	97
White wash of buildings	328	46.5
Tree plantation	366	51.8
Display of Maps and quotations	353	50
Prayer assembly consisting of activities pertaining to moral education and health and hygiene	706	100
Clean classrooms with adequate seating arrangements	706	40
Maintenance of lesson dairies by SKs	283	
Application of teaching strategies as learnt by SKs during training	600	85
Use of teaching aids	629	89
Checking of homework	600	66

- (ii) The data reveals that the day schools open regularly and punctually, prayer assemblies are held daily, teaching-learning materials are available and classrooms looked after properly. SKs generally apply teaching strategies they have learnt during training and also use teaching aids. More attention needs to be given to display of maps and quotations, maintenance of lesson dairies, checking of homework, white wash of buildings and tree plantation. Majority of schools buildings are still insufficient; only a few of them have urinals and drinking water facilities.

### Schools in Unserved Habitations

- (i) In response to local demand and need SKP enlarged its scope of activities to unserved habitations in 1992. Only such habitations are covered where at least 40 children in the age group 6-14 years are available, the local community demonstrates its willingness and involvement by providing accommodation for the school and two SKs are available.
- (ii) The number of such schools has risen from 38 in march, 1993 to 61 in December, 1993. The number of children enrolled in these schools has gone up form 2,520 to 3,063.
- (iii) Discussions in quarterly review and planning meetings of SKB reveal that despite accommodation problems, these schools have started functioning quite well with the help of community support.

### Prehar Pathshalas

To meet the educational needs of those children particularly girls, who do not find it convenient to attend Day Schools, PPs are being run in the evening or night. Though the quality of education in PPs is uneven, there are a definite improvement on the Non Formal Education (NFE) centres run by the State Government. In some SKP villages PPs have been able to attract quite a large number of out of school girls in the group 6-14 years.

The number of PPs has increased by 656 during the past nine months bringing their total to 2105.

### How PPs Function

A spot observation of a stratified and randomised sample of 42 PPs spread over 5 blocks shows that: 75% of the PPs are being run in private or community building and the rest in schools buildings. 62% of the PPs have satisfactory academic achievements, while 38% are below average. PPs enrol a substantial number of out of school girls in the Project villages. 20% PPs are receiving active support from the local villagers and in another 60% the level of community support is

satisfactory. About 20% of PPs are still irregular. Location of a few PPs is not suitable, particularly in the tribal and desert areas. Supervision of PPs is weak; some supervisors fail to reach inaccessible places at night. To run PPs effectively in areas with a scattered population is a difficult proposition, particularly when the nights are dark. A few of the measures taken from July, 1993 to improve the functioning of PPs including: Closer monitoring of academic achievements of individual learners through monthly progress reports. Evaluation of SKs on the basis of learning outcomes of children in PPs. Support and Supervision of PPs to focus on achievement of learners.

### **Angan Pathshalas**

Started on an experimental basis in three blocks (Phalodi, Jhadol and Karauli) in October, 1992, the number of Aangan Pathshalas (courtyard schools) in December, 93 was 40. They enroll 1,627 children of whom 65% are girls.

### **SHIKSHA KARMIS**

The key figure in SKP is the Shiksha Karmi. The management system, the network of training programmes and the interactive communication channels are geared to help, support, strengthen and guide the Shiksha Karmi through whom the objectives of the Project are achieved.

At the try-out stage, the number of SKs was 21, which has now gone up to 2,205 with a target of 2,842 by June 1994. In March, 1993 their number was 1,617 which increased by 588 upto December, 1993.

In April-December 1993, 688 newly selected SKs were provided 37 day induction training. Out of these 647 SKs were found suitable and only 41 could not reach the required standard.

### **Mahila Shiksha Karmis**

The position of MSKs is as follows:

### Details of SKs by Sex

Sex	<i>In March, 1993</i>		<i>In December, 1993</i>		<i>Difference</i>
	Total	%	Total	%	
Males	1478	91.40	1990	90.14	-1.16
Females	139	8.6	215	9.76	+1.16

One major focus of SKP is on girls' education. Its strategies aim at bringing cent-percent girls in the age-group 6-14 to school and retaining them till they complete primary education. Recognising that women SKs can make a vital contribution in promoting this objective, special efforts have been made to engage women as SKs. As a result their number has gone up by 76 during the past nine months. Though educational qualifications are lower for women SKs and the establishment of Mahila Prashikshan Kendras (MPKs) has proved useful, the extremely low levels of female literacy in rural Rajasthan is a major constraint in recruiting women SKs.

### Proportion of SKs belonging to SC/ST

	<i>Percentage of SKs</i>	
	<i>In march 1993</i>	<i>In December, 1993</i>
SC	9	9.5
ST	32	31.5
Total	41	41

SKP villages are situated in socio-economically backward areas where most of the out-of-school children belong to the under privileged sections of society. If persons from the same community are available to work as SKs, this serves the objectives of the Project. It is encouraging to note that the percentage of SKs belonging to SC/ST is considerably higher than the proportion of SC/ST in the State's population (28%)

## **Qualification of SKs**

It is satisfying to note that more than half of the SKs have the educational qualifications required of a primary school teacher in Rajasthan. For the remaining SKs provision has been made for reimbursement of 90% expenditure incurred on text books and 15 day coaching camps to prepare them for Secondary examination. 109 SKs have taken advantage of this scheme so far and upgraded their qualifications to class X. It is also proposed to use distance education courses offered by the National Open School for this purpose.

## **Performance of Sks**

The Performance of the SKs is assessed on the basis of their performance in school and their credibility in the village. The criteria includes:

- \* Enrolment.
- \* Attendance
- \* Academic achievement
- \* Retention.
- \* Participation in training &
- \* Opinion of the Local community.

To assess the performance of a SK, a committee comprising of a representative of SKB, the SK Sahyogi and Subject matter specialist (if available) visits the schools. Then observations are recorded and a decision taken accordingly. 492 SKs have been assessed and graded so far. 57% were found to be excellent, 16% very good, 17% average and 10% in need of remedial coaching.

## **Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching Programmes for SKs**

To imporve the quality of SKs, a programme of diagnostic-cum-remedial teaching has been conducted for the last three years.

- \* On the basis of the performance of SKs, the field functionaries (SKSs, SSs of NGOs) identify those who are weak.
- \* A diagnosis of individual weaknesses of these identified SKs is done during a 3 day workshop.
- \* In the light of the weaknesses diagnosed, the SKs are grouped and provided a 20 day remedial training programme. Emphasis is given to addressing individual weaknesses.

The details of the outcome of these programmes are as under:

Year	No. of participants in remedial training programmes		No. of participants declared successful		No. of participants slotted for another remedial programme	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1991-92	18	9	4	1	14	8
1992-93	47	8	32	7	15	1
1993-94	Awaited		Awaited		Awaited	

### **Incentives And Career Advancement for SKs.**

At the initial stage a Shiksha Karmi is paid an honoararium @ IRS 900 per month. After 3 years satisfactory service s/he gets an annual increment of IRS 50 and after 5 years IRS 100. To retain trained and experienced human resources (SKs) a package of career opportunities for SKs shall be provided:

- \* Pay scales and retirement benefits equivalent to those for regular government teachers will be provided to SKs who have completed 8 years of satisfactory performance and possess Secondary (Class X) certificate. SKs who do not possess Secondary certificate shall be eligible to these benefits on completion of ten years of satisfactory service. Provision for the said benefits for existing SKs would be made from the savings of Phase I.

- \* Expansion and strengthening of provision of special coaching classes for SKs to enable them to attain qualifications upto secondary level.
- \* To consider the feasibility of including existing SKs as Shiksha Karmi Sahyogies, Master Trainers, members of Resource Unit/ Board/Sandhan.
- \* Existing system of educational tours and study visits will be expanded.
- \* Provision of rewards for outstanding performance will be made for SKs.
- \* Increments given after completion of 3 years of satisfactory work will be continued.

Rules to this effect are being formulated by SKB.

Provision has also been made to upgrade the status of outstanding SKs by utilising their services as master Trainers. 60 SKs have been trained for this purpose and 12 have been selected as MTs.

## **TRAINING**

Since the Shiksha Karmi concept substitutes voluntary workers for normally qualified teachers and the Shiksha Karmis have less educational qualifications and no teaching experience. The training of SKs has aquired a central place in the entire strategy of the Project. The purpose of the training of Shiksha Karmis is consequently fourfold.

- \* to upgrade the initial educational qualifications of the selected Shiksha Karmis to a level making it possible for them to run the day schools and PPs in their respective villages;
- \* to continually improve and romote their teaching ability through frequent recurrent training;
- \* to systematically reinforce solidarity among Shiksha Karmis and to enable them to play their role as social activists;

- \* to provide encouragement and support to, as well as feedback from, the Shiksha Karmis.

### **Training will be given in following areas:**

#### **(i) Social relationship and awareness building**

Shiksha Karmis are being initiated in various learning process in order to enable them to

- establish good relationship with the local community;
- persuade parents to send their children to school;
- assist villagers in solving their problems by creation of a better understanding of the issues involved;
- make herself/himself acceptable to the whole community;
- actively participate in various programmes of social development.

#### **(ii) Content**

An assessment is being made of the scholastic deficiencies of each Shiksha Karmis and on that basis a programme to upgrade their qualifications are included in the training course so that they

- master the content of Hindi, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Environmental Sciences for class I-V;
- perform simple science experiments by using locally available materials;
- adapt the course content to the local situation.

#### **(iii) Methodology**

Shiksha Karmis are being enables to develop capability to

- use analytic and synthetic methods for teaching Science and Mathematics ;

- use story telling, drama and other relevant methods for the teaching for Hindi and Social Science;
  - use actively methods fair basic scientific concepts.
- (iv) Health, hygiene and physical education

Shiksha Karmis are trained to

- do physical training exercises to keep fit;
- play various games;
- inculcate regular habits of personal hygiene; and
- make physical training, games and inculcation of personal hygiene a part of the instructional programme in the day as well as night centres.

#### **Duration of training**

Shiksha Karmis are being provided a 37 day induction training followed by 10 days duration in the winter and training programme of 30 days in the summer every year.

In addition to this, two days per month are being devoted to review, problem solving and for planning. This programme of recurrent training will continue during the entire project period.

The training programme has paid rich dividends. The training of Shiksha Karmis and Master Trainers has been conducted successfully by Sandhan with the assistance of SKBs (Academic Wing). In future emphasis will be given to the following:

- \* Care shall be taken to sustain the enthusiasm of SKs by avoding routinisation, retaining creativity and giving importance to activity based interactive processes.
- \* Innovations developed by NGOs in the field such as the initiative taken by SANKALP (Mamoni) to provide opportunities of practice

teaching to SKs, shall be given due weightage while designing future training Programmes.

- \* Emphasis would be given to specific training needs of SKs who have completed 3,5 and 8 years of continuous work.
- \* A gender sensitive approach would be ensured in all training modules.
- \* Special attention shall be given to competency based and multigrade teaching skills for achievements of MLL.
- \* SKs shall be provided with special inputs for health care and integration of disabled children.
- \* Pooling of experiences and resources in teacher training between SKP and LJP, SIERT, DIETs and NGOs shall be encouraged.
- \* Responsibility for training shall be gradually decentralised to regional Resource Units depending on their capacity and competence.
- \* To sustain the enthusiasm of Master Trainers and for making training more relevant to the Shiksha Karmi schools, there is an increasing need for periodic reviews. For this field visits to Shiksha Karmi schools would form an integral part of training programme of Master Trainers in Phase II.

The Training programme will be enriched particularly to enable SK Sahyogis to provide necessary academic guidance to SKs.

SKP village have one VEC each. Experience shows that where VECs are active, the enrolment and attendance of girls have improved. However there is no system of training of VEC members. In Phase II orientation and training of VEC members would be organised in collaboration with LJP.

#### **Mahila Prashikshan Kendras (MPKs)**

A major problem in the universalization of education is the enrolment of girls. To encourage enrolment of girls and to develop

awareness among women it is imperative that women are trained as Shiksha Karmis in as large a number as possible. In most rural areas, particularly in remote and in accessible villages, such women workers are not available. The Project therefore established special training centres for literate women called 'Mahila Prashikshan Kendras' (MPK) to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills required of Shiksha Karmis.

Mahila Prashiksha Kendra (MPKs) were set up to train literate rural women to work as SKs. At present 7 such MPKs are functioning. The intake capacity of each MPK is 30. There are 162 trainees against the intake capacity of 210.

Some important points suggested in the report of the 9th Bi-annual Review December 1992 in respect of MPKs have been implemented during the year:

- (a) Trainers are selected on the basis of their academic qualifications.
- (b) Trainers are selected from the area which is being catered to by the MPKs, so that they are familiar with the language and customs of the region.
- (c) Introducing flexibility to facilitate reduction of duration of the course in respect of women who demonstrate desired level of teaching competencies required by SKs to teach upto class V;
- (d) Meetings with voluntary agencies responsible for running MPKs are held more frequently to ensure continuous feedback.
- (e) Creches are being better equipped.
- (f) It has been decided to provide an aaya with proper training to improve the quality of day-care facilities.
- (g) Sanction of additional funds for, provision of incentives, better facilities, educational tours and an improved creche facility.
- (h) Emphasis on comprehensive development of trainees.

Despite the above measures taken, a number of problems, are being experienced viz.

- \* Non-availability of potential women trainees in SKP villages.
- \* About 30% dropout rate after initial selection.
- \* Shortage of women trainers, especially in Maths and Science, and high turnover of trainers.
- \* Lack of TLM Suited to the special needs of the trainees.

It is proposed to redesign the curriculum, develop separate need-based TLM and to introduce gender sensitization among SKP functionaries.

#### **Training of Women-Shiksha Karmis of APs**

After the selection of energetic women having interest in social work, the training schedule is as follows :

7 day induction training where they are given opportunities to work with village girls and their mothers. After initial induction training of 7 days women go back to their villages and complete a survey, do some environment building and establish rapport with the community.

Second training of 20 days focusses on steps to be taken for starting AP and teaching in Class I.

In the third training of 25 days the women SKs are trained to teach classes I and II.

These women SKs are also provided within-service training of 10 days during Autumn or Winter breaks and 20 days during summer vacations. In between they attend 2 day monthly training cum review Meetings at Block level.

#### **SUPPORT STRUCTURE**

Under the Project, a support structure has been developed to provide necessary support and assistance to the field functionaries. The structure

extends from village level to block level. It includes SKSs, Subject Specialists (SSs) of NGOs in 24 blocks, Mahila Sahyogis in 7 blocks, and two-day review and planning meetings.

### Shiksha Karmi Sahyogis

SKS is a supervisor, but not conventional one. He is to ensure continuous support to SKs and work as friend, facilitator and helper. On the other hand he provides feedback to SKB/SANDHAN/RUs for improvements of training programmes. The number of such SKSs in the Project is 59.

He conducts two-day monthly review meetings of SKs (where there is no NGO) to plan for enrolment, retention, academic achievement of learners and physical facilities as well as to review progress.

It is reported that during the period April-December, 1993, 71% of the Day Schools and 40% of the PPs have been visited once a month by SKSs. However a number of weaknesses in the performance of SKSs have been observed:

- \* They do not visit PPs as often as they should.
- \* Often supervision is conducted in a routine manner and SKs are deprived of proper academic guidance.
- \* It is difficult to obtain services of competent SK Sahyogis in the most difficult and backward areas.
- \* SKB is yet to engage a woman as SKS.

The experience so far underlines the need for more need-based training and rigorous monitoring. The meeting of SKSs and SSs held in April 1993 focussed mainly on these issues and a detailed plan was developed follow up action was reviewed in the next two quarterly meetings held in August and December, 1993.

Consequently the selection procedure for SKSs has been revised so as to include interviews and group discussions over 2-3 days. The training of SKS is also being geared to actual classroom situations.

## **Subject Specialists of NGOs**

SSs of NGO also form part of the support structure for SKS. They are expected to provide guidance and support to SKs, particularly to improve subject competence, organise review and planning meetings, activate BECs and contact parents of out-of-school children. SSs are available in 23 blocks.

Many SS of NGOs have contributed significantly in providing academic support and a few in developing TLM. However some SS lack the subject competence required of them and there is some overlap between the roles of SKS & SS. This is sought to be remedied in the near future.

## **Review and Planning Meetings**

2-Day Monthly 'Review and Planning meetings' are held regularly in each block to give support to SKs and help them in sorting out their problems. In these meetings SKs present reports of the work done in the last month. Each report is discussed in detail with respect to coverage of out of school children retention, achievement levels, distribution of learning material to children, trainings, VEC meetings held and the agenda discussed. SKs are encouraged to come up with workable solution to various practical problems they face. However in some blocks, these meeting tend to acquire a routine nature. Therefore in quarterly meetings of SKSs and SSs greater stress is being given to the proper and effective organisation of 2-days meetings.

## **Village Education Committee**

At the grassroot level Village Education Committees (VECs) have been established in 727 Project-villages, of the 7,397 members of VECs only 915 (12%) are women. The VECs not only help the SKs in enrolment and retention of all eligible children of 6-14 years age group but also contribute to improvement of the physical infrastructure of schools. VEC have assisted in providing suitable locations for PPs. It is seen that regular meetings of VECs are organised to help review the progress of Day Schools/PPs. SKSs attend these meetings quartely and guide their deliberations.

AS per the information available, VECs are involved in the following activities:

Involvement for	No.of VECs Involved
* Enrolment	682
* Ensuring regularity of learners	577
* Construction and repairs of rooms	441
* Strengthening of PPs	131
* Creating social awareness	34
* Special efforts for improving girls' enrolment	48
* Distribution of TLM	493
* Providing facilities for drinking water	144

It is proposed to strengthen VECs by providing necessary training and orientation to their members in collaboration with LJP. Efforts to increase membership of women shall be intensified.

### Mahila Shyogis

Many young children cannot attend schools as they have to take care of their siblings. There are customs which do not allow girls to attend schools. To facilitate their entry to schools, Mahila Sahayogis were appointed. These Mahila Sahayogis are local women who collect children from their homes, escort them from homes and take care of young siblings during the class hours. The experience of the last two years shows that Mahila Shayogis have proved useful in motivating girls to attend school/PPs in 3 Blocks. This experiment shall be extended to other Blocks.

At present there are 73 MSs and 7 Purush Sahayogis in 80 villages spread over 7 blocks. Out of them 5 are working exclusively with Day Schools and 29 with PPs, whereas 46 MSs are working both in Day Schools as well as in PPs. Their number has gone up by 28 since in March, 1993. The experiment has facilitated attendance of school/PPs by girls who have to walk a considerable distance.

## **Support Activities**

### **TLM for Learners**

Since 1992-93, provision of free text books and stationery has been made for learners of Day Schools also. Provision for learners of PPS had been made earlier. This year material costing about IRS 20 Lakh has been provided to 63715 learners of Day Schools. Special efforts made by SKB this year has resulted in 90% of SK schools & PPs receiving TLM by June, 1993.

### **Reading Material for SKs**

SKP publishes a monthly 'Shiksha Karmi' magazine which includes lessons in language, science and Social Science. The 'Charpanna', the monthly bulletin of SANDHAN, also makes a useful contribution.

### **Educational Tours**

From April to December 1993, educational tours were organised as under

<i>For</i>	<i>No. of blocks</i>	<i>No. of students</i>
Class V students	37	3238
Students of PPs	29	3130
SKs	10	249

### **Tournaments for Learners of PPs**

For the first time, this activity has been introduced in the current session. 4716 students of 23 blocks participated in the tournaments. Field reactions are encouraging.

## **MANAGEMENT**

The Project is implemented by SKB, an autonomous body. Governing Council (GC) of SKB takes policy decisions, reviews progress and approves budget and expenditure. Executive Council (EC) of SKB executes the policy decisions.

### **Governing Council (G.C.)**

G.C. meets once a year. Its fourth meeting was held on May 5, 1993. Decisions regarding preparation of case studies of different activities under SKP, use of bullock/camel cart on experimental basis for transporting children to PPs, career advancement of SKS etc. were taken.

### **Executive Council (E.C.)**

Three meetings of E.C. were held during the period April to December 1993. In the 15th meeting held on April 15, 1993, it was decided to constitute MTF, to organise educational tours and tournaments of SKP students etc. In the 16th meeting held on July 15, 1993, it was decided that provision should be made for SKB members to make field visits, to strengthen MPKs and for arranging proper publicity for SKP activities. The 17th meeting was held on October 27, 1993. A number of decisions regarding promotion opportunities/incentives for SKs who have rendered 8-10 years satisfactory services, interface with Lok Jumbish Project (LJP), starting of Resource Unit (RU) in Urmul Trust Bajju, expansion of Aangan Pathshalas etc. Were taken.

### **Secretariat of SKB**

The Secretariat of SKB consists of 7 units:

- \* Establishment Unit to look after personnel administration and selection of blocks and NGOs.
- \* Planning and Review Unit to organise meeting of Joint Bi-annual Review (JBR), GC, EC, Block Development Officers (BDOs) SKS, NGOs etc.
- \* Academic Wing to coordinate and monitor academic programmes, PPs, research, publications, correspondence lessons, development of TLM and provide remedial programmes;
- \* Administration, Finance and Monitoring Unit to look after internal administration and expenditure;
- \* Management Information System (MIS) Unit to compile, analyse and disseminate information/ data;

- \* Mahila Prashikshan Kendra-Womens Training Centre (MPKs)'and Mahila Task Force-Women Task Force (MTF) are responsible for progress of girls education, smooth functioning of PPs, etc.

The Secretariat is headed by Secretary/Project Director, SKP. He is assisted by one Deputy Director (Academic), two Project Officers, one Evaluation Officer, one Assistant Director (Statistics), two Assistant Directors (Academic), four Subject Specialists and one MPKs consultant with some support staff, three Research Officers, one Financial Adviser and Administrative Officer.

In view of the expansion of the Project it is planned to strengthen and modernise the headquarters of SKB. A staff Development plan is also proposed to be adopted. Efforts are being made to fill up vacant posts and to give preference to women.

## **MIS**

SKP proposes to switch over from a manual to a computerised MIS in the near future so as to make monitoring and review more effective.

## **Co-ordination Among the Various Agencies**

To coordinate and improve the training programmes a Coordination Committee comprising of heads of SKB, Sandhan and RUs has been constituted recently. The Secretary, SKB is the Member Secretary and Director Adult and Non-formal Education is Chairman. The Committee meets quarterly to review and plan the training programmes. During April-December four such meetings have been organised. Problems relating to training are solved in these meetings.

A core group has also been set up to facilitate networking of NGOs. Three such meetings have so far been held. These have helped in coordination and improvement of training programmes.

## **Lok Jumbish-Shiksha Karmi Interface**

SKB and LJP have decided to collaborate closely to achieve their common goal of universalisation of primary education in Rajasthan. It

has been agreed that SK schools and PPs in LJ Blocks shall henceforth be opened on the basis of micro-planning and school mapping by LJ functionaries and in accordance with the decisions taken in this regard by Khand-Stariya Prabhandan Samiti (KSPS). Repair and construction of buildings of SK schools in such blocks shall be undertaken by LJP. VEC and Mahila Samoohs established by LJP/SKB in such blucks shall serve both the projects.

It has also been decided that in the following areas LJP and SKP personnel will work together:

- \* To develop Teaching Learning Materials for the NFE centres/Prehar Pathshalas.
- \* To develop training modules for the instructors/Shiksha Karmis of NFE centres/PPs.
- \* To develop Teaching Learning Material, test items and to reshape the Shiksha Karmi training modules in the light of Minimum levels of learnings (MLL).

## **IDS**

Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur assists in programme evaluation and also evaluates achievements of children in SK schools and PPs. They visit Schools/PPs/MPKs and actively participate in the Review and Monitoring meetings of SKR.

### **Block Level**

#### **(a) Block Development Officer**

In the management and administration of SKP, the Block Development Officer (BDO) plays a significant role. Funds for honorarium, TLM, equipment etc. are allotted to him. He utilises the budget, appoints SKs and supervises their work. His work performance is monitored through review and planning meetings. The co-ordination between SKB and Block level functionaties has been satisfactory.

**(b) Block Education Committee (BEC)**

To ensure community participation at the block level and to review, plan and solve problems, BECs are to be constituted in each block where the Project is in operation.

**Regional Units**

The management system of the Project has by and large functioned satisfactorily. The Board has retained its autonomy and has been able to adapt and change according to the requirements of the Project. In Phase II, in addition to the consolidation of existing activities, expansion of the programme, new innovative activities are to be introduced. This will necessitate decentralization of management functions.

At present, the responsibility of selection of blocks, villages, Shiksha Karmis, and Master Trainers rests with the SKB. With enhanced coverage of the Project, decentralization of management would be carried out by establishments of Regional Units. These Units with active support of Board would be assigned specific responsibility for a cluster or blocks. Each Regional Unit will be provided with 3-5 specialists and necessary supporting staff. Such a Unit had been established in Banswara to share the functions of SKB on experimental basis in September, 1993.

# **10**

## **ANDHRA PRADESH PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT**

The objective of the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP) is to improve primary schooling. It has two broad-based components - teachers training, and school building construction. The key pedagogic innovation is activity-based learning, the key institutional innovation is the Teacher Centre at the sub-district level. The key process innovation is systematic planning of teacher-training. The project was launched in 1989.

Implementation of the project is undertaken primarily at the district and mandal levels. (Andhra Pradesh is divided into 23 districts and 1104 mandals). Detailed Implementation Plans (DIPs) are worked out at the level of each district. The plan identifies the mandals to be covered in the year, and allocates all teachers, mandal resource persons, supervisors, and Teacher Centre secretaries to particular courses. Detailed schedules are drawn up for all training programmes as well as Teacher Centre meetings. The DIP has proved an effective means by which responsibilities can be assigned to the district and mandal levels while permitting the centre to retain overall coordination.

Teacher-training is organised on a 'cascade bases'. District Institute of Education and Training's (DIET), teacher educators are trained by the Project Headquarters. These in turn train mandal trainers who, together with DIET staff, conduct in-service training of teachers and Teacher Centre staff.

The following principles are always kept in-mind:

- providing teacher generated learning activities
- promoting learning by doing, discovering and experimenting
- developing individual, group and whole-class work
- providing for individual differences
- using the local environment
- creating an interesting classroom by displaying children's work and organising it effectively.

There is flexibility and scope for considerable variation in the conduct of particular courses. An interesting feature of several courses is that demonstration lessons are given to groups of children in order to illustrate how the new pedagogic techniques can be managed in the classroom.

**Impact of the Project:** The project has trained almost all teachers and more than 10,000 personnel. More than 3,000 Teacher Centres are operational.

Evaluation of the project has been undertaken in a variety of ways. Teachers' reports on what they are doing are cross checked by direct observation by DIET staff; profiles of teacher behaviour are drawn up which are independently verified by profiles of pupil behaviour in the classroom; and surveys are undertaken to measure the reactions of pupils and parents. Case studies and qualitative monitoring are undertaken.

Significant differences have been found in the classroom behaviour of both teachers and pupils in project schools as compared with non-project schools. Purely didactic methods in which the teachers talk to the whole class are far less prevalent and teachers are asking more questions designed to encourage individual response or general discussion. Teachers have been spending more time on organizing materials or helping children to engage in their own learning.

Pupils in schools where the new pedagogy is practised are enjoying school more. The level of pupil enjoyment was found to be significantly and positively correlated with the degree to which the new principles were being implemented.

Absenteeism is lower in project schools than in non-project schools for both boys and girls. Sustainability has been a focus of attention in the project. It has become apparent that if the project is to be sustained, it will be necessary to train as many teachers as possible. This is because the project has been implemented most effectively in those schools where all teachers have been trained and which have not received an influx of untrained teachers. Teacher Centres will have a vital role to play in maintaining a support system amongst teachers.

It has become evident that the project should take into account the need to stimulate demand for education, as well as focus on the quality of its delivery; that the community needs to feel a greater sense of ownership of the project and its schools; and that maximum attention has to be paid to books, assessment and pre-service training.

It is not just in the classroom moreover, that capabilities have been developed. Planning skills have been refined and practised at different levels of the state education bureaucracy. In addition, specialist skills have been developed in critical fields such as evaluation, assessment and case study research.

In the next phase (1994 onwards) while the ongoing activities will continue, interventions will be developed within the parameters of the District Primary Education Programme, (DPEP), in certain selected districts.

## **APPEP PRINCIPLES**

There are six fundamental principles upon which the new approach to teaching in the primary schools is based. These are:

- a) Providing learning activities
- b) Promoting learning by doing

- c) Developing individual group and whole class work
- d) Recognising individual differences
- e) Using the local environment
- f) Creating an interesting classroom.

#### **A. PROVIDING LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

Children learn more and understand what they have learned if they participate in the learning process. If children are required only to sit and listen, they quickly become bored and their attention wanders. When children are outside the school they are continually on the move and do not sit still for very long. Children need frequent changes in what they are doing to keep them interested and happy. Children do not change when they enter the school and our teaching must include many different things for the children to do. Children are also naturally curious and the work prepared for them must provide opportunities to use their curiosity.



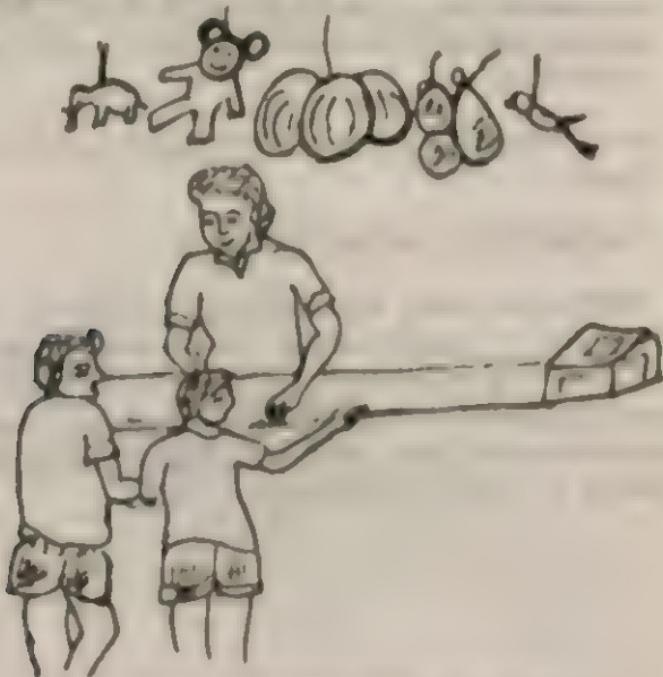
*These children are comparing different pieces of cloth*

Keeping children active is therefore important in helping learning. However this does not mean simply keeping the children physically active and running about the school. Activities that encourage learning require the children to be mentally active. It is important that the children are made to think and ask questions about what they are doing and that they do not simply have to listen to what the teacher tells them.



*These children are looking at plants.*

The children must have opportunities to collect information and use that information in a way suited to their ages. To record what they have discovered or to discover patterns or to suggest explanations for what they have seen. This discovery is part of learning and things that children discover for themselves they are more likely to remember.



*These children are finding out what is sold in a local shop.*

To carry out these activities the children will have to think carefully and in some way no matter how simply to attempt to use the information they discover. This leads to greater understanding and more learning. In this way the children can be encouraged to use their curiosity to discover things that the teachers in the traditional classroom would tell them.

Activities in the classroom are important parts of learning. Activities which do not help the children learn have little value and every teacher should always question whether any activity has a purpose.

All activities must contribute to learning either by reinforcing ideas already met by the children or by introducing their ideas.

**Teachers- Think about these:**

1. Make a list of the activities you have used in your teaching over a period of one week.
2. How many of the activities you have listed only required the children to copy from the blackboard, a book or from the teaching you provided?
3. How did the activities you provided encourage the children to think deeply?

**B. PROMOTING LEARNING BY DOING:**

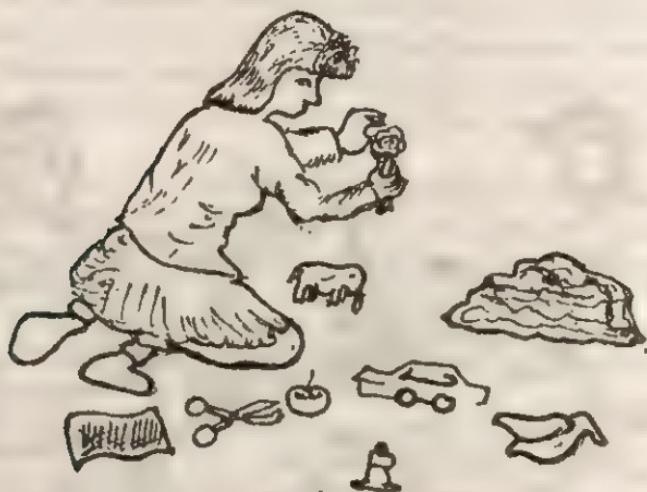
Children learn quickly if the teacher provides practical work for the children to do. No teacher would try to teach a child to write by just telling about writing and demonstrating writing on the black board. The child learns to write by practising on his slate or paper. In the same way children learn other skills by practice, for example speaking, listening and drawing. This applies to all subjects.



*Children are weighing items in home-made balance*



*Using of stones sticks bottle tops, helps in learning to count.*



*Making models out of different materials can help in understanding shape.*



*By asking questions and listening to the answers the children can learn directly from other people.*

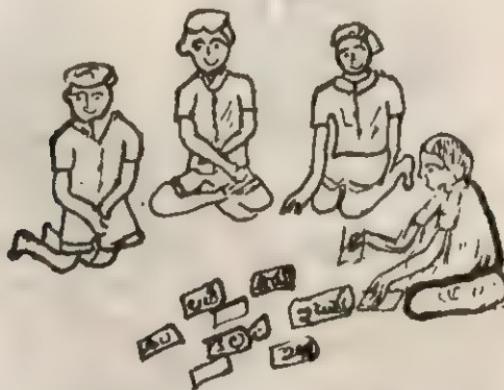
In all these examples the children are not only active but also do the work in practical way. Through activities such as these they gain greater knowledge and understanding about what they are doing.

**Teachers - Think about these:**

1. Did the children use different sorts of materials to help them learning.
2. Did the problems you gave the children require them to find answers in practical way?
3. Did the activities you provided give the children opportunities to use the knowledge and skills they already had?

**C. DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL GROUP AND WHOLE CLASS WORK:**

Good teaching provides for the children to work in a variety of patterns. Sometimes they will be working as individuals as for example when they are drawing or writing a poem. Sometimes they will be working in groups and at other times the teacher may have the whole class together. The combination of individual group and whole class work will depend upon the particular lesson being taught. Good teachers make careful



*Hear the children are using cards to help develop reading.*

decisions about how to organise the children and the pattern of working may change during a lesson. For example a lesson may be arranged this way.

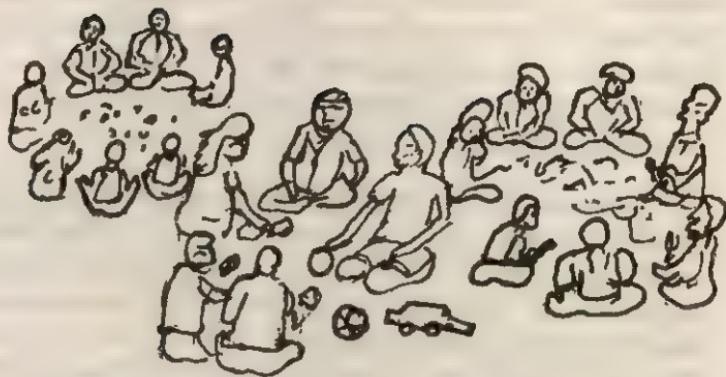
Working in groups can help the children learn quickly if the work given to the groups is well planned by the teacher and the groups are



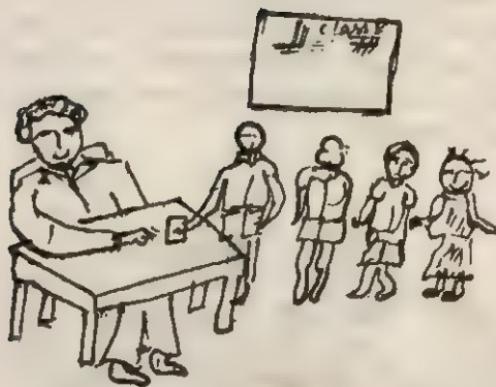
*Hear the teacher is helping the children in groups.*



*The teacher introducing the lesson to the whole class*



*The class works in groups.*



*Each group reports back to the class.*

provided with enough materials. The arrangement of the groups leads naturally to the children talking about their work and helping each other

as the work progresses. In the traditional class room there was little opportunity of the children to exchange ideas and in most traditional class rooms talk and discussion were discouraged may be noisier place as the children talk about their work and learn from each other. When the children are in groups. It helps develop interaction not only between the children but also between the teacher and the children.

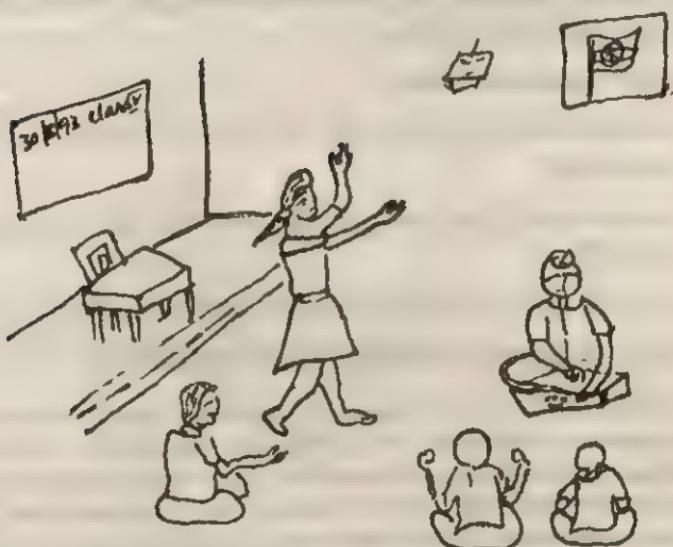
In another period the children might be in groups the whole time whilst in yet another some or all of the children might be doing individual work for all or part of the time. The number of possible combinations of individual group whole class work is very large and the teacher and the children have very patterns that could be used Traditional teaching was almost totally whole class teaching the APPEP is not solely group work. Group work however does form a major part of the APPEP and this has introduced a major change into the project schools. The APPEP encourages the teacher to sit the children in a circle with the members of the group looking inwards. When the children are in groups the teacher will want to move about the classroom to see what is happening. As he moves he will talk with the children, helping them in their work, answering questions from individual children as they arise and asking questions which encourage the children to think more clearly or deeply about what they are doing. The size of the groups should vary according to the task being undertaken.



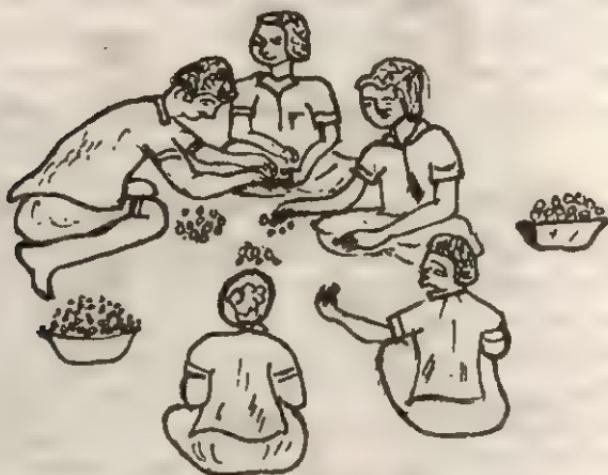
*Here two children are reading in unison.*



*Here children are making a model of a house.*



*Here many children are taking part in a dramatisation*



*Here the children are using seeds to count.*

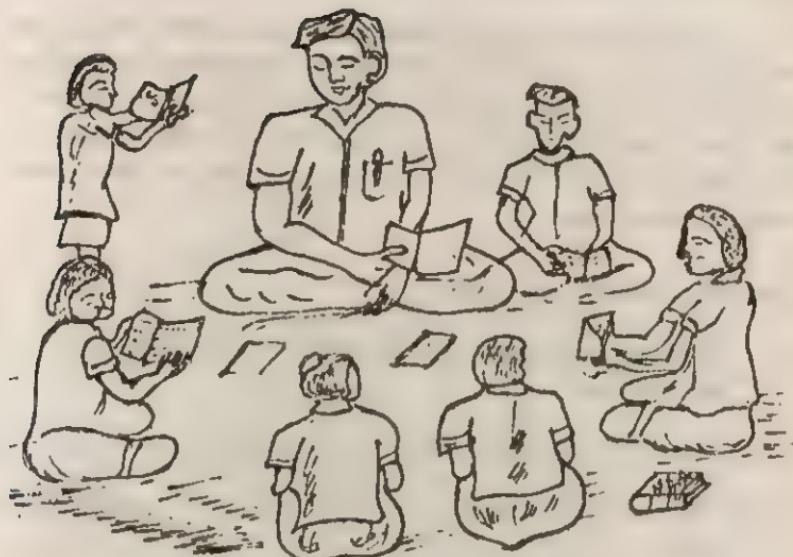
Small groups make it easy for the teacher to provide equipment and for each group to organise itself. In small groups each person can be given a job to do and every one can see what is going on. No child should be without a task and a purpose.

**Teachers- Think about these:**

1. For how much time during one day were the children working as individuals?
2. For how much time during one day were the children working in groups?
3. For how much time during one day did the children work as a class?

**D. RECOGNISING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES:**

Although the children may be organised into groups for teaching, it is important to remember that children are individuals. Each child develops at his own speed and it would be wrong to expect that all children should be at the same stage in their development at the same time. Some children mature more quickly than others. The teacher has to be aware of the individual differences of the children and to provide help for those who need it.



*Here the teacher listens to one child read while the others work as a group.*

For those children who do not understand the tasks given to them the teacher will need to provide extra help. Unless the teacher recognises the slow children and provides special help for them, these children are likely to fall behind in their work and may leave school because they are frustrated. Other children may be quicker to do the work given to them and the teacher needs to give them different tasks to keep them learning.



*children use resources while others complete their work.*

An important way of identifying individual children is by keeping records of what the children do. The teacher should keep notes of the work done in each subject and at any time the teacher should be able to say exactly what each child has and has not done. Those children who are falling behind the others can be discovered quickly and special work can be given to them.

**Teachers- Think about these:**

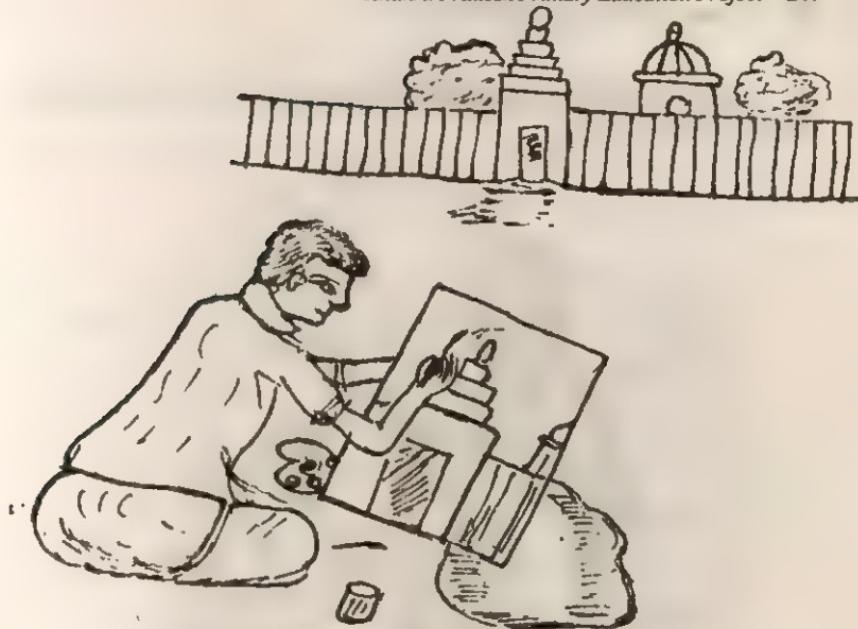
1. Write a note on each child in your class mentioning his special characteristics.
2. Which children do you not know enough about?
3. How could you make sure that you become more aware about each child?

**E. USING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT:**

The environment around the school is a rich resource for learning and much learning can take place outside the classroom. The first step must be for the teacher to make a check list of the resources that are available nearby. The teacher could use the following:

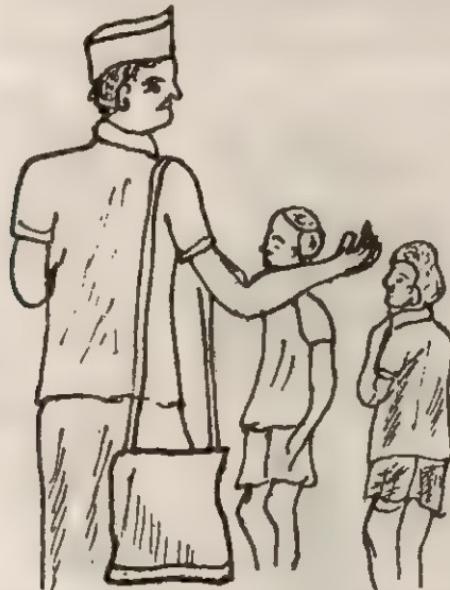
<i>objects</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>places</i>
sticks	carpenter	shop
stones	barber	factory
plants	health worker	bus stop
trees		temple
cars		

The teacher should write down the names of the people and places that could be used, and then arrange suitable activities for the classes.



*Here the children are drawing a temple they are visiting.*

The people who live near to the school may be of great help. Some will be doing useful jobs and will be willing to explain their work to the children.



*Here the children are asking the postman about his daily routine.*

Many people have great deal of knowledge and these can be used for interesting lessons.



*Here the children are interviewing an older person.*

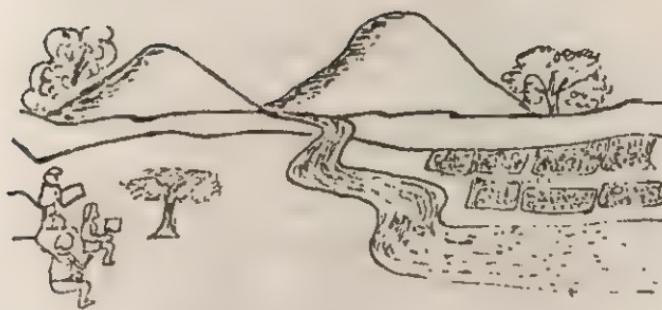
The physical environment can provide many lessons. The teacher needs only to think for a short time of the great variety of possible topics.



*Here children are observing trees.*



*Children are Collecting stones*



*Children are Visiting a river valley*

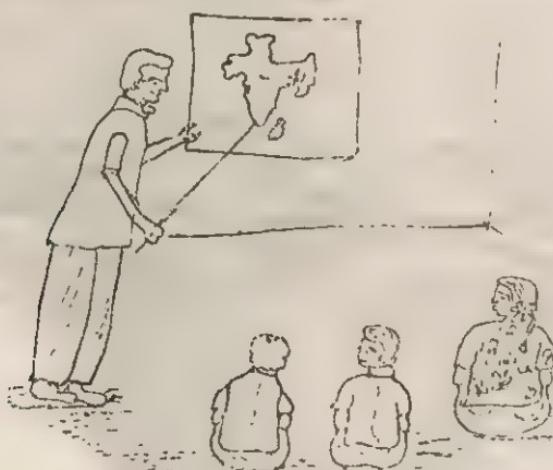
The local environment can be used in all subjects including Telugu and every opportunity needs to be taken to find out what can be introduced into the classroom to make the lessons more meaningful and interesting for the pupils.

#### **Teachers- Think about these:**

1. Make a list of the lessons in which you have used the local environment over a period of one week.
2. In which subjects have you not used the local environment recently? why was that?
3. How frequently have you taken the children out of the classroom recently?

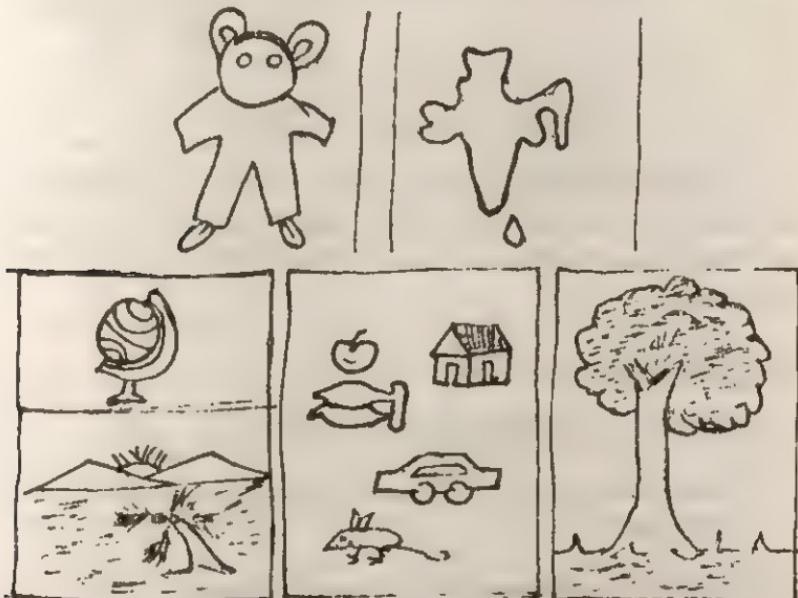
#### **F. CREATING AN INTERESTING CLASSROOM:**

Classrooms need to be as attractive as possible so as to encourage the children to come to school and to learn. The teacher needs to use every possible part of the walls for the display of materials and to provide stimulation for the pupils. Displays can be made up of objects such as models, the local things and of diagrams or charts. Some of the displays will be provided by the teacher who will use the material to focus the attention of the children on the lesson.



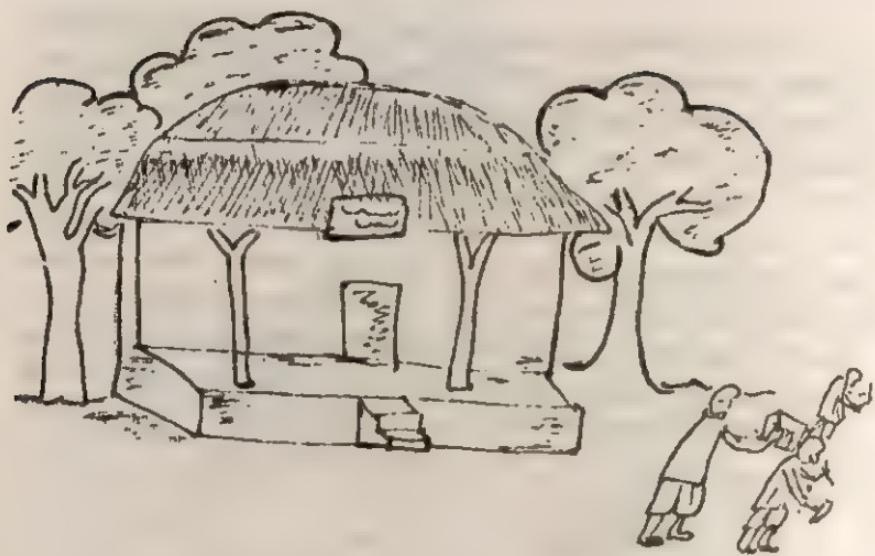
*Here the teacher is drawing the attention of the children to a chart which has been prepared.*

Much of the work on display will have been prepared by the children. It is important that the children's work should be displayed and choosing which work to display requires the teacher to make careful assessments. Not all the children's work needs to be displayed. A selection should be made and not only the best should be displayed. Some children have a natural gift for drawing and presentation and always produce better work others despite how much effort the poorer children put into their work. It is important that every one to do his very best the teacher should choose the best work done by each child and display it even if the standard of some pieces is notes high as that of others. In this way all children will have their own best work on display. The careful arrangement of the display is also important for learning.



*Here the displays are carefully arranged.*

All displays have a limited usefulness. Once this usefulness has ended the display should be removed and replaced by the new work being undertaken by the class. Leaving out of date work on display serves no useful purpose. Material which can be used again should be stored. Material which can be used again might be given to the children to take home to their parents.



*Here the children are taking their work home*

Creating an interesting classroom requires a great deal of thought and effort by the teacher, but the thought and effort will be more than fully returned in the liveliness and curiosity of the children and the amount they learn.

**Teacher- Think about these:**

1. Does the classroom look tidy and attractive?
2. What has been done to make the classroom an interesting place for children?
3. Have the children been able to display their work?

# 11

## LOK JUMBISH PROJECT

### **Introduction**

Lok is a Hindi word and means people, Jumbish an Urdu word and means movement. Together they denote the idea of a people's movement, as well as movement for the people. This people's movement is for providing primary education (In Lok Jumbish primary education means education from class I to class VIII) of satisfactory quality to all boys and girls of Rajasthan.

### **Rajasthan Scenario**

Rajasthan is situated in the north-west of India. Its population is about 47 million and in terms of area it is the second largest state of the country. Although there has been considerable expansion of education in Rajasthan, with 38.55 percent literacy (54.99 for male and 20.44 for female), educationally speaking Rajasthan is the country's most backward state. The parameters in regard to enrolment and retention compare unfavourably with the national picture. Educational backwardness is both a symptom and cause of Rajasthan's backwardness.

Rajasthan Government has consistently been trying to ameliorate the lot of the poor by making large scale investment in programmes directly affecting their lives. The state government has also been known for the introduction of several innovative programmes such as *Antyodaya*, Food for Work, Women's Development Programme, Shiksha Karmi Project, SWACH, etc.

## National and International Perspective

The Lok Jumbish Project (LJP) was jointly formulated by Government of India and Government of Rajasthan in the wake of the adoption of the National Policy on Education, 1986 by the country's Parliament. The preparation of the Lok Jumbish Project also demonstrated an awareness that unless exceptional measures were taken the constitutional directive to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to 14 years of age would continue to remain a distant dream. Apart from the urgency imparted by the Educational Policy, the international pressure in favour of UPE also contributed to the launching of Lok Jumbish. UNESCO had committed itself to education for all in its medium Term Plans prepared during the 70's and 80's. Unicef also, while emphasising the need for specific interventions to improve the status of children, offered itself as a firm ally in the movement for children's basic education. During the 80's the World Bank also pledged itself to enhance support for basic education. As the peoples of the world moved towards International Literacy Year and World Conference of Education for All (1990), final touches were being given to the Lok Jumbish Project.

**Table 1: Gross Enrolment Ratio (1991-92) and Dropout Rate (1988-89)**

Sex	GER classes I-V		Dropout rate classes I-V		GER classes VI-VIII		Dropout rate classes I-VIII	
	India	Rajasthan	India	Rajasthan	India	Rajasthan	India	Rajasthan
Boys	116.61	106.67	46.74	57.80	74.19	65.93	59.38	63.06
Girls	88.09	50.05	49.69	66.70	47.40	22.61	68.31	73.20
Total	102.74	79.16	47.93	60.40	61.15	44.93	65.00	65.69

### Phase I

After a good deal of exchange of views between Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and Government of India a decision was taken to launch Phase I mainly to establish a management system, to build training and technical resource support arrangements, to examine the feasibility of the Lok Jumbish approach regarding people's

participation, and to make a start with some programmes for the improvement of quality of primary education. Phase I was of two years' duration. Although it was supposed to commence in June 1992, it actually began only in September 1992. Phase I extended to 25 blocks with a total population of about 4.6 million. As against the projected investment of Rs. 160 million, the actual expenditure was about Rs. 150 million. funds were provided by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Government of India (GOI) and Government of Rajasthan (GOR) in the ratio of 3:2:1. An initial evaluation of Phase I was undertaken in October, 1993, jointly by SIDA, GOI and GOR. The evaluation team observed that during its first year of operation Lok Jumbish had stimulated and developed a range of critical functions, systems and resources and results which were commendable. Work had commenced in the right direction and mechanisms for self-reflection and adjustment had been established. After the October 1993 evaluation, and before the conclusion of Phase I in June, 1994 there were two joint missions to review the Lok Jumbish activities. These missions also expressed satisfaction about the progress of the project.

## Phase II

For all practical purposes, decision regarding Phase II was taken in March, 1994 and it was expected that necessary approval for the continuance of the project would be received before the conclusion of Phase I. However, clearance was given by the Central Government only in March, 1995. The Government of Rajasthan provided maintenance funds between June, 1994 and March, 1995. This period was utilized for an intensive review of all programmes and to bring about needed improvements.

The objectives of Phase II of Lok Jumbish are a bridge between the limited objectives of Phase I and the long term goals of Lok Jumbish. Phase II will take well planned steps towards effective achievement of universalisation of primary education, simultaneously emphasising quality improvement. As stated by the joint evaluation team (October 1993) LJ will move from the pilot phase during which it played the role of "developer, demonstrator and catalyst" to the next phase playing the role as "transformer of the mainstream education system from outside".

The duration of Phase II of Lok Jumbish will be of 3 years and it will extend from the present 25 blocks to 75 blocks (50 additional), taking the coverage from the present 4.6 million to about 13 million. It is expected that an investment of Rs. 800 million will be made during Phase II, again to be shared by SIDA, GOI and GOR in the ratio of 3:2:1.

**Table 2: Overall Information on Coverage of LJ**

<i>Name of the block</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Population of the block (1991)</i>	<i>No. of villages</i>	<i>No. of clusters</i>	<i>No of operationalised</i>
1. Arain	Ajmer	109,697	128	5	5
2. Pisangan	Ajmer	173,720	114	5	5
3. Garhi	Banswara	188,399	166	5	5
4. Kishanganj	Baran	108,345	203	8	4
5. Lunkaransar	Bikaner	156,382	145	7	6
6. Ahore	Jalore	150,191	111	5	2
7. Bichhiwara	Dungarpur	180,805	174	7	4
8. Chohtan	Barmer	171,105	169	5	3
9. Jhadol	Udaipur	147,044	256	9	7
10. Kaman	Bharatpur	154,287	204	7	3
11. Phagi	Jaipur	130,453	170	6	5
12. Phalodi	Jodhpur	161,438	86	6	4
13. Pratapgarh	Chittorgarh	159,206	353	11	5
14. Pokaran	Jaisalmer	115,677	133	5	3
15. Shabbad	Baran	83,028	236	8	4
16. Bikaner	Bikaner	232,046	171	9	4
17. Kolayat	Bikaner	132,657	206	8	2
18. Nokha	Bikaner	208,913	128	6	2
19. Rajgarh	Churu	221,371	208	6	3
20. Todaraisingh	Tonk	90,790	118	4	1
21. Talera	Bundi	214,017	265	8	1
22. Jhalrapatan	Jhalawar	162,9947	315	8	1
23. Abu Road	Sirohi	80,611	81	4	1
24. Thanagazi	Alwar	144,119	159	6	1
25. Bali	Pali	149,232	90	5	2

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### Goals

The overall goal of LJ is to achieve universalisation of primary education within the shortest possible time through people's mobilisation. The project presupposes that creation of a people's movement would generate a stimulus for human development which, in turn, would contribute to a basic socio-economic transformation.

The long term goals of LJ have been spelt out in such a manner that they elaborate different aspects of UPE and also call for greater equity and relevance in education.

A distinct lesson of the last 2-3 years is that the goals of LJ should be restated in terms of the rate of girls' participation in primary education. Experience also indicates that achievement of targets in respect of girls' participation will remain unachieved unless all programmes and strategies treat this as the goal. It is a truism that boys' and that the crux of the issue of planning for equity lies in taking firm strides towards women's equity. In LJ we are zeroing in on this single target and reformulating the strategies and programmes to subserve this goal.

As a part of the LJ process a benchmark survey to make a correct assessment of the participation rate of boys and girls and their dropout rate is undertaken at the commencement of work in a particular block. The benchmark data reveals that the enrolment and dropout figures given in official statistics are far from accurate. In all the 25 blocks the real participation rate comes to between 55 and 65 percent for boys and between 25 and 30 percent from girls (as against the official figures given in Table 1). This shows that the annual progress in girls' enrolment during the last 45 years was merely 0.5 percent. In setting targets for Phase II we have projected a rate of increase of 5 percent in girls' enrolment and about the same for boys.

### Strategies - the Pervasive Features

In LJ we take the strategies rather seriously. Attention is focused on them in all exercises of programme review. All LJ personnel as well

as the associated institutions are expected to readjust their thought and action if they are not fully adhering to the strategies. The principal strategies are given below.

**Decentralisation:** Since the objective of LJ is to revitalise the basic education system, action and decision making must rest at the ground level. The processes envisaged in the project are, therefore, firmly rooted at the lowest levels. This means

- a. that the village community should have the ability to review the educational situation and to responsibly plan for its improvement;
- b. that the decision making level should be as close as possible to the village, the decision making body should base its decisions on proposals received from the village level, and those decisions should be acted upon;
- c. that enough authority to manage their day-to-day work should be vested in heads of schools; and
- d. that the system should shun bureaucratization and should have the capacity to adequately respond to the local needs.

**Centrality of gender:** Reaching out to women is to reach the very core of the present and future society. Enabling women to improve self-image, become articulate and self-confident-in other words, moving towards their empowerment - will contribute enormously to drawing and retaining girls in primary education. Emphasis at the village level has to shift to forming and sustaining women's groups, women teachers are to be reoriented as activists and the number of women in the staff at all levels has to increase.

**Teachers' status and participation:** Parents will not send children to school unless teachers are regular and teach properly. The teachers' self-esteem has gone down and their status has been deteriorating. The teachers' performance and status can be improved through training, their participation in planning and management of education and by display of genuine regard towards them.

## LJ GOALS

- Providing access to primary education to all children upto 14 years of age - through the school system as far as possible and part-time nonformal education where necessary;
- Ensuring that all enrolled children attend school/NFE centre regularly and complete primary education;
- Ensuring that the quality of education is improved and all children achieve at least minimum levels of learning;
- Creation of necessary structures, and setting in motion processes which would empower women and make education and instrument of women's equality;
- To pursue the goal of equity in education - between boys and girls and between the socially and educationally disadvantaged sections and the rest of the society - and also to initiate measures for provision of basic education to the handicapped children;
- Making necessary modifications in the content and process of education to better relate it to the environment, people's culture and with their living and working conditions; and
- Effectively involve people in the planning and management of education.

**Quality :** In education we have got accustomed to so much mediocrity and trashiness that transforming this system of poor quality and low performance into one with an uncompromising commitment to quality and high performance has to permeate all aspects of the project. This involves change in the mentality of the staff, revision of rules and procedures and a new work culture.

**Training :** Properly organised, training can become an important tool for people's participation, improvement of teachers' performance and creation of a dynamic management system. In the LJ system of training the difference between the trainer and the learner dwindle and

training, supervision and evaluation gradually become a merging activity, rather than phases in an ongoing process of learning.

### **Evaluation :** Essentially evaluation entails

- i. an implicit affirmation of LJ values;
- ii. observation of what is happening;
- iii. 'measurement', or placing value, on what is observed; and
- iv. reinforcement - positive and negative - built into the assessment made.

The crucial shift in the LJ approach is to ensure that the above activity becomes the competence and responsibility of all actors in the project.

### **Management**

The project is administered by an autonomous and independent body jointly established by GOI and GOR. Lok Jumbish Parishad is a society registered under Rajasthan's Societies Registration Act, 1958. LJP has its own Rules, Regulations and Byelaws which provide it with a functional framework.

### **State level**

At the helm of the management system is a General Body, headed by the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, with the responsibility to undertake an annual review of progress, lay down policy guidelines, approve the annual budget and consider the audit report. All executive authority of LJP is vested with the Executive Committee headed by Shri Anil Bordia, an experienced educational administrator, and the state Education Secretary as ex officio vice-chairman. The membership of the Executive Committee includes senior officials of GOI and GOR, representatives of teachers' unions and voluntary agencies, persons concerned with women's development and educationists. The Committee meets regularly and makes all decisions by consensus. There is a State Coordination Committee under the chairmanship of the state Education Secretary to facilitate involvement and cooperation of all state government

departments and agencies. In addition, there are subject committees with authority to make decision in the area concerned. For example, there is a State Resource Team for the implementation of the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) scheme and a committee each on Environment and Culture, Women's Development, Nonformal Education, Buildings Development, Media and Communication, etc.

The management system at the headquarters is headed by the Director, an officer of the Indian Administrative Service appointed by GOR. The Director is assisted by a team of 13 professionals drawn on deputation from the state government, universities or voluntary agencies. Each of them has a subject responsibility as well as an overseeing role over a couple of blocks. LJP has developed partnership responsibility with a number of NGOs who provide technical resource support. The foremost among them is Sandhan—the Training and Academic Programmes Wing of which takes much of the responsibility for the training of teachers and NFE instructors, and for the preparation of textbooks, and the Research Wing provides research and evaluation support. In addition Vihan undertakes most of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) responsibility on behalf of LJP and Digantar, Rajasthan Voluntary Health Organisation, Alarippu, Social Work and Research Centre make contribution in areas of their concern.

### **District Level**

District level management structure has been created in one district, namely Bikaner. As the blocks of this district have come under LJ, the state government has transferred to LJP the management responsibility at the district level. Experienced LJ staff members have been appointed as District Education Officer (DEO) (Elementary Education) and another one to oversee the work of all the 4 blocks of the district and to improve coordination. Simultaneously, the state government has transferred to LJP the responsibility for running District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) at Bikaner. The post of the Principal of DIET has been filled by a person who has worked closely with LJ. The Government proposes to transfer more and more districts under LJP so that the LJ management culture may permeate the districts, both to improve management and as preparatory to eventual integration.

### **Block and Cluster Level**

Each block has a Block Steering Group (BSG) consisting of a project officer, a woman officer (called Samyukta) whose main responsibility is to assist in planning and implementation of gender related programmes, and 3-4 assistant project officers, each with a subject as well as area responsibility. One of the first responsibilities of BSG is to divide the block into clusters of 25-35 villages. The overall responsibility for implementation of LJ programmes in a cluster is assigned to a voluntary agency or a department of government which has village level cadres. BSG functions as the mobilising agency in clusters where no other agency is available. Approximately half of the clusters at present are under the charge of voluntary agencies and the other half are with BSG. Each mobilising agency appoints a staff of 2-3 persons at the cluster level, with a staff of a couple of women, to facilitate formation of village level groups for school mapping and mincroplanning.

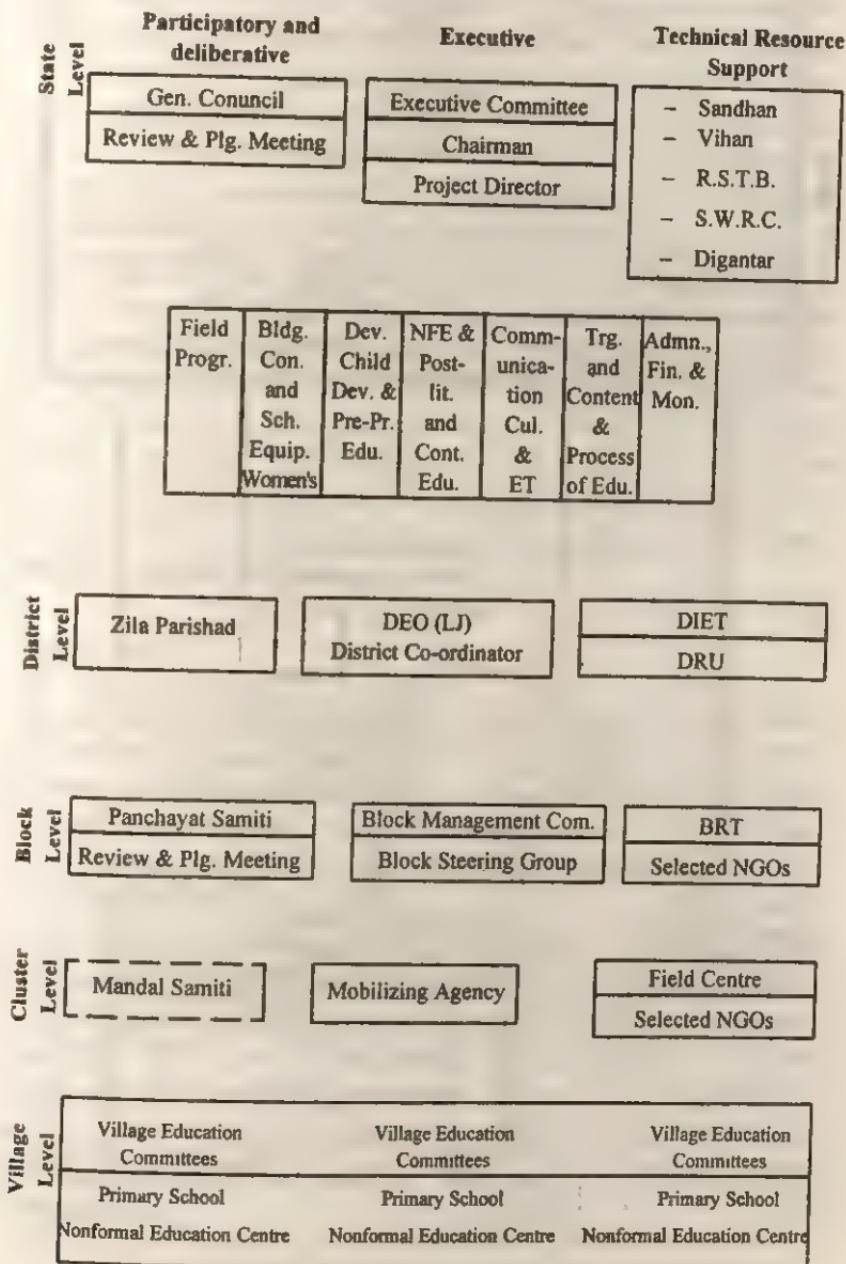
### **Review and Planning Meetings (RPM)**

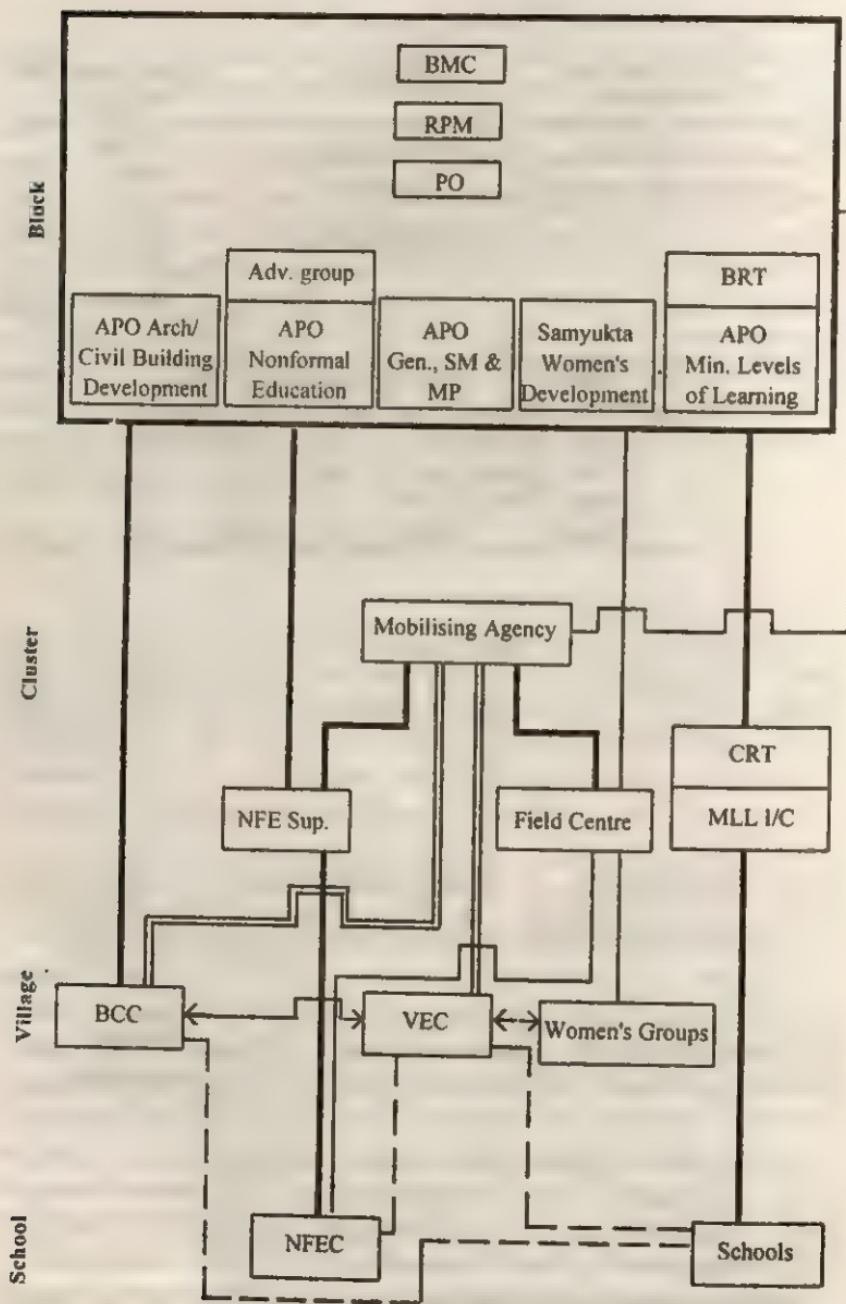
State level RPMs are held once in two months and each BSG organises a block level RPM every month. Persons responsible for implementation of the programme at the block level are invited to the former and those responsible at the cluster level to the latter. RPM meetings have now become a well-accepted forum for sharing of experiences, raising of problems and issues, building camaraderie and undertaking planning for the subsequent weeks.

### **MIS**

Work on development of Management Information System (MIS) started in early 1993. While the formats developed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for collection of information about the school system were adopted without any change, new formats were prepared for all other programmes and activities. These were finalised after tryout and consultation with colleagues at different levels. MIS became fully operational in September 1994. There are three levels of origin of information : village, cluster and block. While collecting and compiling information each level is to use it for review of their work. Information received are analysed at the subsequent level and feedback provided. Training has been given to all concerned personnel to enable them to understand the relevance, value and techniques of MIS.

## LOK JUMBISH MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



**BLOCK AND CLUSTER LEVEL MANAGEMENT**

## School Mapping and Microplanning

Numerous techniques have been developed by experienced workers for enabling people to undertake planning for improvement of their own lot. Most of these techniques rely on selection of a group which is provided with training in communication and in survey and planning processes. These techniques also have a component of mapping of village features. School mapping as techniques for planning of primary education facilities through a trained core team is similar to other such techniques of participatory planning. The strength of the school mapping technique is that it is concrete and people associating themselves with it can see the results of their labour. This technique also provides for two-way relationships. On the one hand, the villages prepare a plan for improved facilities, and on the other, they pledge to send their children to attend primary schools or NFE centres regularly. The experience in LJ reveals that village community can be involved in the planning for universalisation of primary education if school mapping work is done with sincerity and competence.

### The Concept

Traditionally, school mapping has been considered as an exercise for location of schools, based on a systematic use of the statistical criteria. Sometimes this approach does not give adequate importance to small clusters and isolated and scattered habitations. In LJ the focus has been placed on ensuring that primary education becomes accessible to practical all children of all habitations. Hence, instead of being a technique of school location, school mapping has been envisaged as the method for achievement of the goal of universal access. Along with expansion of facilities, detailed planning for improvement of existing ones - such as a school and NFE centre - is also stressed. Microplanning goes beyond this. It provides a mechanism for planning for, and ensuring, children's participation on a regular basis in school or NFE centre, and in doing so it emphasises the involvement of teachers as well as the village community.

## **Operationalisation**

The main stages in the process of school mapping and microplanning under LJ are as follows:

- a. **Core team** - The initial action for environment building and survey is to be undertaken by a village core team. The responsibility for selection of the members of the core team and for their training rests with the mobilising agency. The core team is to comprise 8-9 persons, men and women in equal numbers, known for their commitment to the development of the village. The headmaster/headmistress and the instructor of NFE centre are also members of the core team.
- b. **Environment building** - The Block Steering Group as well as the mobilising agency jointly work for creation of an environment which enthuses the local people to involve themselves in school mapping and microplanning activities. A variety of modes are employed for this purpose - including the traditional and folk forms of communication, group meetings, conventions, gram sabhas, electronic media, etc.
- c. **Survey** - The core team is to begin school mapping work by drawing up a preliminary village map to ensure that principal features of the topography are clearly laid down and all habitations, including scattered homesteads, are indicated. The survey has two aspects: firstly, there is to be a survey of all children in 6-14 years age group of all households, to ascertain whether they are regularly attending school, if not the reasons thereof, and whether there is justification for providing additional facilities. The second aspect of the survey pertains to the school and the NFE centre of the village. The present strengths and deficiencies are to be recorded.
- d. **Analysis** - The data emerging from the survey is to be analysed by the core team and the BSG. It is then discussed with village community for preparation of a provisional plan.
- e. **Preparation of plan** - Keeping in view the norms, the core team is to prepare a provisional plan for school improvement, expansion

**MAP OF VILLAGE TOOT KI DHANI (BALAPURA)  
DRAWN-UP DURING SCHOOL MAPPING**



**LEGEND :**

- 1 Village Boundary
- 2 Primary School
- 3 Dwelling Places
- 4 Handpump
- 5 Place of Worship
- 6 Boys attending School
- 7 Boys not attending School
- 8 Girls attending School
- 9 Girls not attending School

of educational facilities and measures to be taken for ensuring participation by all boys and girls. The provisional plan is to be discussed in detail with the village community-men as well as women. The plan is to be finalised keeping in view the reactions of the village community.

- f. KSPS approvals** - The proposals for school improvement and expansion of facilities, including creation of additional posts of teachers, are to be submitted for approval to KSPS. Ordinarily, KSPS should give consideration to the village level proposals within one month. Approval accorded by KSPS is to be treated as sanction on the basis of which all concerned should proceed to take necessary action.

**Table 3: Education Facilities Sanctioned by KSPD (upto 30th June, 1995)**

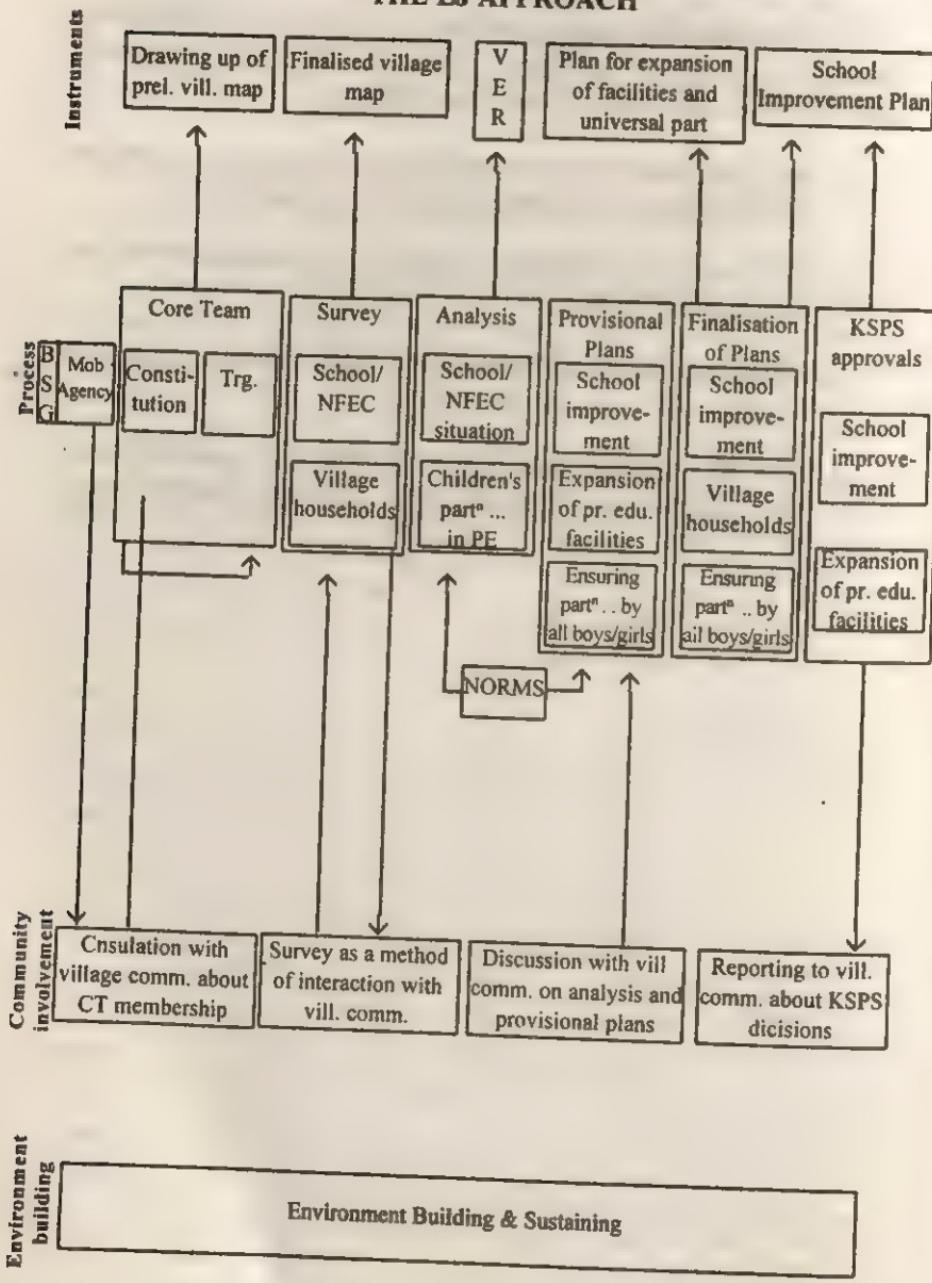
<i>Name of Block</i>	<i>NFE Centre</i>	<i>SK School</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Upgradation to UPS</i>	<i>Addit ional Teachers</i>		
					<i>PS</i>	<i>UPS</i>	<i>Total</i>
Arain	247	12	3	9	9	35	44
Pisangan	190	5	6	13	58	105	163
Garhi	308	22	20	10	34	21	55
Kishanganj	67	8	1	6	3	10	13
Lunkaransar	114	4	9	18	42	7	49
Phagi	63	4	9	1	12	-	12
Ahore	11	1	-	1	3	3	6
Jhadol	136	30	18	2	2	9	11
Bichhiwara	133	16	13	1	28	-	28
Pratapgarh	48	24	8	-	-	-	-
Shahbad	39	14	-	2	2	4	6
Chohtan	13	1	5	3	7	-	7
Kaman	45	4	16	3	11	22	33
Pokaran	21	4	11	5	36	-	36
Phalodi	35	22	17	2	49	-	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>1470</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>512</b>

## **Instruments**

The process of school mapping and microplanning is to yield some instruments which serve as means for strengthening the microplanning process. The instruments and their functions are:

- a. the village map, which is to enable all concerned to see whether all the families of the village were, in fact, kept in view;
- b. the school improvement plan, which would gradually become more and more sophisticated;
- c. the facilities plan, which is the instrument to ensure that effective access is provided to all children; and
- d. the Village Education Register which is to facilitate family-wise and child-wise monitoring of children's participation and progress.

## SCHOOL MAPPING AND MICROPLANNING FOR UPE — THE LJ APPROACH



## School Improvement Programme

### Buildings

School improvement programme received attention in LJ from the very beginning. Within weeks of commencement, contact was established with a few Delhi-based architects with a reputation for commitment to socially and environmentally relevant designs. Three of them were requested to take up work in a block each and one block was assigned to a team of excellent engineers of the state Public Works Department. These people took up work in a R & D spirit, setting in motion a process for qualitative improvement of school buildings and the school environment, reducing costs, and utilizing local materials and extant technologies. The amount of work done so far is, perhaps, modest but a style has been developed which is altogether different from the traditional government system.

### Equipment

Development of standard lists of school equipment and teaching/learning aids has been an eye-opener. It was revealing to find that governmental systems responsible for running large numbers of schools had no standard lists, not even much interest in having them - NCERT's list for Operation Blackboard being an exception in this respect. A large number of school teachers provided leadership and came forward to undertake a survey of what school teachers wanted and prepared lists which can be treated as a satisfactory minimum list of school equipment and aids. Standardisation was done with the help of Indian Bureau of Standards, consultation with teachers, and discussion with renowned manufacturers.

### Curriculum and Textbooks

New set of competencies were prepared for the subject of Environmental Studies. Produced in Mathematics, excellent textbooks. Hindi textbooks have evolved during the last three years they may require a thorough re-examination before they can be considered fully satisfactory.

## Teacher Training

Introduction of the MLL scheme has imparted an urgency to the teacher training programme. As a result, the motivational training programmes have had to take a back seat. Training continues to be voluntary for teachers but we do try to persuade practically all of them to attend one course of 10 days each year to update their ability to cope with the new scheme. At this time (July 1995) we are also making an effort to involve teachers in training in yoga and vipashyana - the Buddhist technique of concentration, meditation and the search within.

## Supervision and Evaluation

Greater attention will have to be paid to these areas in the months to come. Pupil evaluation so far concentrates on recurrent evaluation of scholastic competencies with little attention to personal traits, psychomotor skills, etc. Record keeping for evaluation is also not quite satisfactory — this is another area where we need to develop better capability.

The following format gives relevant details in a summary form of what we are attempting to do.

### SUMMARY OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

<i>Programme Description</i>	<i>activities</i>	<i>Processes</i>	<i>Results</i>
1. Improvement of School buildings	1. Survey of all existing buildings. 2. Priority to repair work. 3. Additions & alterations. 4. Addition of classrooms and toilets. 5. Construction of compound wall.	1. Setting up of Building Construction Committee (BCC) of villagers & their training 2. Preparation of design by experts in consultation with BCC. 3. Repair/construction work through BCC. 4. Transparency regarding employment of labour and purchases. 5. BCC collects and invests funds for future maintenance.	1. Work started in – 12 blocks – 457 schools. 2. Sanction of Rs. 44 million issued for repairs & 145 additional classrooms. 3. Construction of boundary wall in 60 schools through funds raised by BCC. 4. Works completed : – 204 schools repaired – 45 classrooms.
2. Provision of equipment	1. Review of the present situation. 2. Study of available norms in various organisations. 3. Preparation of minimum	1. Careful study of present availability and why use not made of it. 2. All lists and standards prepared by school	1. Beginning made in June, 1995. Provision of minimum equipment in all schools in LJ blocks in 1995-96.

(Contd.)

(Contd.)

<i>Programme Description</i>	<i>activities</i>	<i>Processes</i>	<i>Results</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lists of           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- furniture and school fittings</li> <li>- drinking water needs</li> <li>- teaching/learning aids.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Standardization of all equipment.</li> <li>5. R&amp;D (e.g. for PVC blackboards/slates and improved chalksticks/slate Pencils.</li> <li>6. Fixed contingency grant for all schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teachers themselves.</li> <li>3. Preparation of revised procedure for use of equipment by teachers.</li> <li>4. Training of teachers in use of supplied equipment and preparation of teaching aids.</li> <li>5. Decentralised purchase system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Teachers feel much less constrained to use equipment.</li> <li>3. Improvised equipment being prepared to complement MLL scheme</li> </ul>
3. Curriculum reform (Introduction of MLL Scheme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decision to implement minimum levels of learning (MLL) scheme the basis of curricular reform.</li> <li>2. Review and revision of MLLs drawn up by GOI committee (1991)</li> <li>3. Development of innovative environmental studies programme</li> <li>4. Setting up of state level experts group to regularly review implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Benchmark assessment of children's achievement levels at the time of introduction of scheme.</li> <li>2. Orientation of teachers, management personnel and experts.</li> <li>3. Development of 'experimental field' of 45 schools in Arain block.</li> <li>4. Consultation with environmental education experts/workers for development of activity and discovery based environment studies programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Large-scale involvement of teachers in curriculum reform.</li> <li>2. MLL scheme implemented in 15 blocks in classes I, II, and III.</li> <li>3. Coverage extends to           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,107 schools</li> <li>- 3,061 teachers</li> <li>- 80,750 students.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Teacher and students have greatly enjoyed new environmental education programme and have suggested improvements.</li> </ul>
4. Development of new textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of earlier textbooks with reference to curriculum reform.</li> <li>2. Appointment of groups of experts, teachers and illustrators to write new textbooks.</li> <li>3. Printing and production of attractive textbooks.</li> <li>4. Decision to provide free textbooks to all children.</li> <li>5. Development of a system to ensure that textbooks reach schools at the beginning of session.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All textbooks were tested in 'experimental field' of 45 schools.</li> <li>2. First revision done on the basis of above tryout and use of revised textbooks in about 1000 schools.</li> <li>3. By interaction with teachers a second revision done at the end of 1994-95 and final textbooks Prepared for 1995-96 session.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Textbooks integrated with work books, prepared :           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Hindi and Mathematics for classes I, II, III and IV.</li> <li>(ii) Environmental studies for classes III and IV</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Free textbooks to students in all 25 blocks.</li> <li>3. Mathematics class I textbook adopted by State Government for all schools from 1995-96.</li> </ul>
5. Teacher training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of a cascading system of training through Key Resource Persons Master Trainers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wide-ranging interaction with teachers for realization about the need for annual training.</li> <li>2. Teachers training viewed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Linkages created with resource institutions, e.g.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sandhan, Jaipur</li> <li>- Eklavya, Bhopal and Dewas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

(Contd.)

(Contd.)

<i>Programme Description</i>	<i>activities</i>	<i>Processes</i>	<i>Results</i>
	<p>Teachers.</p> <p>2. Introduction of a system of motivational training, emphasising reflection and action.</p> <p>3. Linkage of teacher training with curriculum reform and introduction of new textbooks and conduct of such programmes on a large scale each year.</p> <p>4. Repreparation of training modules and their revision on the basis of experience.</p> <p>5. Organization of 2-day monthly meetings for all teachers in schools where MLL implemented.</p> <p>6. Strengthening and harnessing Sandhan as a resource institution, also taking help of other NGOs</p>	<p>in a holistic perspective involving 'change of person' as well as inculcation of skills and attitudes.</p> <p>3. Emphasis on linking training and teaching by assigning training responsibility to teachers, not depending only on teacher trainers.</p> <p>4. Teacher training is voluntary (teachers are expected to attend, not obliged to do so) and courses are residential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alarippu, New Delhi</li> <li>- Indian Institute of Education, Pune.</li> <li>2. General acceptance among teachers of annual training.</li> <li>3. Successful organization of training of           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 127 key resource persons</li> <li>- 910 master trainers</li> <li>- 3990 teachers (in motivational training)</li> <li>- 2900 teachers trained each year in MLL scheme.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Monthly meetings of teachers with supervisors and master trainers.</li> </ul>
6. Initiating a new system of pupil evaluation	<p>1. continuous and comprehensive evaluation accepted as an indispensable part of school improvement programme.</p> <p>2. New system of evaluation built into textbooks and teacher training.</p> <p>3. This aspect is attended to during school supervision.</p>	<p>1. New evaluation system forms part of interaction with teachers.</p> <p>2. Teachers encouraged to use pupil evaluation to provide remedial help to students who are lagging behind.</p> <p>3. Evaluation not used for passing/failing from class to class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinct improvement in children's performance</li> <li>2. Teachers are better able to relate themselves with children.</li> </ul>
7 Supervision	<p>1. Formation of block and cluster resource teams to oversee implementation of MLL scheme.</p> <p>2. Appointment of a special supervisor in each cluster to improve supervision.</p> <p>3. Solving of problems faced by teachers in monthly meetings.</p>	<p>1. Attempt being made to do away with division between training and supervision by giving training responsibility to supervisors and vice versa.</p> <p>2. Reports of school visits by gone down and there is a clear improvement in punctuality and regularity of attendance of teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. System getting established under which every school in LJ areas is visited for supervision once every month.</li> <li>2 Number of dysfunctional schools has drastically</li> </ul>

## Nonformal Education

Informal education is a recent entrant into the realm of educational planning. Only after National Policy on Education, 1986 did it acquire full acceptability. Central Government started a large number of NFE centres after NPE. Being aware of the problems with Government's NFE programme Lok Jumbish made a Start nearly a year after the launching of Phase I. Our stand has been that every effort is to be made to send all children to school and only those who just cannot be in school should be provided with NFE. Such persons would include.

- Children residing in small habitations,
- Working children,
- Girls who have to look after their siblings and attend to other domestic chores, and
- Children who are of the age of 9 years and above and cannot, therefore, be admitted in school.

It became clear that the main clientele of NFE will be girls and the basic features of the programme would have to take this into account. Consequently, three principles were evolved to govern the NFE programme of Lok Jumbish : one, there has to be an equivalence between the formal and the nonformal educational system; two, the gap between formal and nonformal should be reduced, both should benefit from the strengths of each other; and, three, there should be scope for enough flexibility in the programme in all its organisational aspects.

One of the issues which has received special attention in LJ's NFE programme is a proper selection and training of instructors. We are trying to build a system of 37 days' training for every instructor every year, along with a 2-day workshop every month. The curriculum, textbooks and the system of pupil evaluation is on the lines of the formal system. This is being attempted to give effect to the postulate of equivalence. The corollary of this approach is that the duration of NFE course for younger children is 5 years and for those who are 9 years and above it is 3 years.

As regards the management of NFE, the responsibility has been placed squarely with the mobilising agencies at the cluster level. They have to take care of all aspects of the programme, particularly those which affect quality. A specially selected and trained supervisor is appointed for about 15 centres with a view to ensuring that every centre is visited at least once every month. A comprehensive MIS has been laid down which enables people at the cluster and block levels to identify the strengths and problems at the NFE centre level. The programme is regularly evaluated at the cluster and block levels. There is a state level committee which reviews the progress and quality of the programme once every two months.

A framework of principles and postulates for NFE has been developed for all to keep in view. We believe that observance of this framework will ensure achievement of the specific objectives of NFE programme.

**Table 4: Nonformal Education programme - Progress up to 30th June, 1995**

<i>Name of</i>	<i>No of centres approved by KSPS</i>	<i>No. of instructors trained</i>	<i>No. of NFE centres started</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>		
				<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Amin	247	224	167	1,277	2,535	3,812
Pisangan	190	146	140	673	2,083	2,756
Garhi	308	178	175	1,097	1,618	2,715
Kishanganj	67	66	66	572	780	1,352
Lunkaransar	114	50	46	385	556	941
Jhadol	136	64	51	487	618	1,105
Kaman	45	46	25	125	276	401
Bicchhwara	133	55	36	213	371	584
Phalodi	35	30	14	165	165	330
Phagi	63	40	33	196	543	739
Pratapgarh	48	35	32	203	330	533
Shabad	39	26	23	181	255	436
Ahore	11	9	6	48	88	136
Chohtan	13	22	6	50	85	135
Pokaran	21	9	12	107	168	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,470</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>5,779</b>	<b>10,471</b>	<b>16,250</b>

### NFE PRINCIPLES AND POSTULATES

- NFE instructor should be selected in consultation with the village community, but his/her ability to run the centre should be a precondition for selection.
- No centre should be started unless the instructor has received due training and effectiveness of the initial and subsequent trainings should be ensured.
- Village community should provide suitable space for running the centre.
- Centres should run during the day wherever possible. If necessary they may be run-in the evening or night but satisfactory lighting arrangement must be ensured.
- Curriculum, pupil evaluation and certification should ensure equivalence between NFE and the formal system.
- Textbooks, teaching/learning aids and essential equipment should be made available before a centre is started.
- Proper arrangement should be made for seating of children and provision of other amenities, particularly drinking water.
- Mobilising agency must take responsibility for creation of an effective system of management and supervision. It should be ensured that a centre is not closed down as long as there are children to benefit from it.
- NFE should be viewed as an instrument of women's equality and it should be ensured that women instructors and girl students improve their self-image and build confidence to play an active role in society.
- Centres should be started in groups and on fixed dates only.

## New Initiatives

### **ICDS - ECCE interface**

On behalf of Lok Jumbish, Vihan, an NGO promoted by Lok Jumbish, has taken up the programme in three blocks: Garhi, Kaman and Todaraisingh. The programme in Garhi, Kaman and Todaraising is identical - in 140 and 25 Integrated Child Development Services Programme (ICDS) centre respectively Vihan has taken up a large programme of training of Angawadi workers and their assistants. The training is in developing a better understanding about children, building self-confidence and communication skills. Regular meetings are held with the workers and effort is made to run the centres properly, strengthening; in particular, the pre-primary education programme. This intervention has already had an impact. Only about 20 percent of the ICDS centres were running properly before the Vihan intervention, the percentage has now increased to about 60.

A beginning was made in Kaman with 25 child development centres. Main emphasis was on training of two workers for each centre, as also on orientation of the village women to prepare toys and learning aids for children with no-cost materials available locally. Government of Rajasthan has decided to entrust the entire new ICDS project of Kaman block to Vihan. The present programme of 25 child development centres will be merged in the ICDS project and effort will be made to develop a new model of ICDS. This model would attempt to provide joyful and creative activities to children and to establish a linkage between ICDS and primary school enrolment.

Vihan has also developed a child development resource centre, a collection of inexpensive toys and considerable capability to impart training to child development workers. They publish a monthly journal for children, which is quite popular.

### **Samplav - the Journal**

A very wide range of people are involving themselves in Lok Jumbish. Apart from teachers, Shiksha Karmis and NFE instructors, these include students of schools and college, village youth, folk artists,

VEC members, etc. LJP requested a sensitive young educationist, to initiate dialogue with people working in educational institutions in rural areas to learn from their experiences, and also to get from them anecdotes, poems, and short essays. These along with some classic tales relating to education and short summaries of important research work on pedagogy have been published in the form of a well-produced and readable journal. Ten issues of this monthly journal have already come out. The circulation has increased from the initial 700 copies to 5000, and the demand keeps increasing. An immense interest has been generated among teachers, NFE workers, literacy instructors and village youth, a large number of who have written back to the editor conveying their appreciation of the initiative.

An interesting aspect of this journal is that the editorial staff regularly organises workshops with the readers, who are encouraged to write to the editor. This network is expanding and now extends to about 2000 persons.

### School Health Programme

The entire responsibility for the implementation of the school health programme has been given to Rajasthan Voluntary Health Association (RVHA) and Vihan.

RVHA started its programme in May 1994. They have taken it up in Shahbad and Arain block, covering 66 schools and 28 NFE centres. They made a beginning with a survey of the existing health problems and found that a large number of children were suffering from ear, nose, throat, skin and eye diseases. Neither teachers nor parents were paying attention.

An important aspect of the RVHA programme is the training of teachers. During the 3-day training programme, 1-2 teachers from each school and NFE instructors are oriented in the school health programme, mainly about the manner in which teachers can explain preventive and remedial measures to the children and their parents. Teachers are also asked to maintain a record in respect of all children. Medical officers from local primary health centres, as well as private medical practitioners

are invited to come and examine each child. Teachers who have received training are also provided with a few simple books and a medical kit.

Vihan has taken up its programme in 30 villages of Phagi block. In addition to providing 5-day training to teachers, they impart training to children of classed IV and V. These children are made better aware of health issues and are also engaged to help younger children. Vihan also undertakes the medical check up of all children and is in the process of developing a system for maintenance of children's record.

### **Modified School Calendar**

In January 1994, the Block Steering Group of Jhadol block convened a conference on new initiatives that may be taken in the context of Lok Jumbish. Practically all people who participated said that the present school calendar does not take into consideration the special needs of the tribal people who compose 70 percent of Jhadol's population. A group was set up under the chairmanship of the local Sub-Divisional Officer. After detailed consultations with teachers, representatives of teachers' unions, people from the village community and officials of Education Department a revised calendar was prepared. This calendar maintains 245 teaching days but has altered the time of vacation to suit the agricultural and social needs of the local people. It is felt that the changed calendar would increase children's enrolment, improve retention and make their attendance more regular.

In due course, the matter was taken up with the senior officials of Education Department and with State Institute of Educational Research and Training at Udaipur. After obtaining all clearances the matter was referred to the Director of (Primary & Secondary) Education who conveyed approval of the modified calendar.

An interesting beginning has been made. The full import of this innovation will become clear only after 2-3 years. Meanwhile, demand has been raised in several other blocks to allow them to modify the school calendar.

### **Women Teachers' Forum**

Teacher training programmes are organized on a large scale in Lok Jumbish. These programmes are residential and make a heavy demand on the participants' time. Since these programmes are not compulsory it was found that the participation of women teachers was much less than that of the males. An innovative move was made by the Block Steering Group of Pisangan block. In September, 1994 they convened a 2-day conference of women teachers. They were provided a joyful and interesting environment, with an opportunity to raise professional and personal issues. The conference turned into a process of better understanding by the participants about the obstacles in their professional work, including participation in teacher training programmes. The participants analyses the reasons which hindered their participation and also explored solutions. They acknowledged that not only was it necessary for them to attend training courses but also to agree to reside at the training camp. In subsequent training programmes the participation of women teachers in Pisangan block increased substantially.

Similar forums of women teachers have been set up in 9 blocks. In some of these blocks women teachers meet once every 2-3 months and raise issues which they would like considered during training programmes.

### **Women's Residential Institute for Training & Education (WRITE)**

WRITE is a residential institute for the training and education of rural women who are desirous of improving their educational qualifications and developing capability for self-reliance. WRITE is located at Jalore which is the country's most backward district from the point of view of female literacy. The need for WRITE was felt because women workers with basic education are just not available in most of the villages of Jalore and the neighbouring districts. Women who complete their primary/upper primary level at WRITE could be appointed as Shiksha Karmi, NFE instructor, Anganwadi worker, etc. They would also serve as LJ activists in whichever village they decided to reside.

WRITE was started in March, 1995. The number of women receiving education at the institute is 40. Initially we were wondering whether enough candidates would be forthcoming for admission. However, the number of applications was so large that WRITE is not able to provide places to all of them. Women admitted in WRITE are mostly illiterate, only 8-10 of them have had some education. However, they are keen to pursue their studies and to obtain certificate equivalent to class V, and also to continue up to class VIII. The pace of their progress is extraordinarily fast. Most of the illiterate women should be able to achieve standards prescribed for class V within 9 to 10 months. In addition to the academic programme, women at WRITE are imparted education in health and family planning, nutrition, laws affecting women, and other subjects of their interest. Some of them have chosen additionally, to acquire income generation skills, facilities for which are being provided for them.

It is rather early to make a surmise about WRITE. However, the initial experience does show that a large number of women who are living a life of deprivation and loneliness are deeply motivated to receive residential education and it is probable that they would achieve education up to class V and even class VIII within less than 2 years. They might make excellent paraprofessional workers and would certainly be able to lead a life of dignity and self-reliance. They would also serve as LJ workers in districts known for extreme educational backwardness.

### **Education of Minorities' Children**

In Kaman block more than 60 percent of the population comprises Muslims. These are, Meos, a hardy agricultural community known for economic and educational backwardness. A survey of one cluster of the block revealed that of the 1,600 students at the primary level, the number of Muslim boys and girls was 226 and 39 respectively.

The Block Steering Group of Kaman took an initiative by holding consultation with *imams* of the mosques and other influential persons. In addition to persons belonging to the Muslim community representatives of teachers' unions elected representatives and a large number of teachers

were invited. It was found that most of the *imams* and other participants were unhappy about the isolation of the Muslim community and the educational deprivation of their children. They said that they would send their children, boys as well as girls, to school if standards could improve, school timing adjusted with religious instruction provided in the mosques, and Urdu can be taught as an additional subject. BSG accepted these proposals and decided to make a beginning in 14 villages.

Multi-faceted school improvement programme has been taken up and the time of the opening of schools staggered to enable the children to receive religious instruction prior to their coming to the school. Selection has been made of Urdu teachers and a 15-day training given to them. They have started teaching in the 14 selected schools. Meetings have also been organised with other teachers of these 14 schools and they are fully supportive of this move. A large number of children of the Meo community have taken admission in the schools.

Enrolment of Muslim children in the regular school system is a challenging task in several other blocks also and we hope to learn from the Kaman initiative to design satisfactory programmes for drawing all children to the school system.

### **Low Cost Hostels**

A large number of children from tribal families are not able to enrol themselves in schools because they reside in scattered habitations. In Pratapgarh block this problem is further aggravated due to extreme poverty.

The Block Steering Group of Pratapgarh had been exploring the possibility of setting up low cost hostels for tribal children who cannot avail of the benefit of schooling or nonformal education. They found that after the completion of Jakham irrigation project a large number of buildings were lying unused. BSG approached the irrigation Department. They not only agree to make available the buildings which were of no use to them, they even agree to make them fit for use as hostel. A hostel was started in June, 1995 with 40 tribal children.

The parents of the children were encouraged to come to the hostel premises and also to contribute grain and pulses for the children's food. Practically all the parents made a contribution. Vegetables were planted in the irrigated land along the hostel provided by Irrigation department.

Children have been admitted in class I, II, or III. However, a need was felt to provide supplementary instruction to them to enable them to keep pace with other children. A tutor-cum-warden has been appointed to help children with their studies. The hostel has been given an interesting name - *Apna gahar*, which means home away from home. Pratapgarh BSG people are optimistic. They are looking for more space to run a few more hostels on the same lines.

## 12

### **AREA-INTENSIVE EDUCATION PROJECT FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

In a movement for social change, activists, doctors, teachers, women's associations, youth clubs, philanthropists and administrators have linked skills. Working in tandem with project staff, the community has ensured the success of the Area Intensive Education Project (AIEP). Their efforts have transformed Krishnagiri, a small slice of Dharmapuri district in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The AIEP impacts all aspects of social life and activity of the 75,000 villagers in the area. It was conceived as a holistic education programme. Providing non-formal and early childhood education to villagers, training teachers and field-staff and establishing linkages between existing education and health schemes was perceived to the role of AIEP.

The project soon outgrew its mandate as a timebound educational project and grew into a mass action for the holistic development of the community.

Selected because of the area's educational and social problems, Krishnagiri is today a beehive of social and welfare activities. By day, animators from the AIEP conduct lessons in the under-staffed and single-teacher primary schools. In the evenings, free tuition classes for school-students are run alongside adult literacy classes in the Education and Development Centre in each village.

Trained by AIEP staff, children from the local orphanage chip in by performing animated street-plays carrying the message of literacy

and girls' education. Women's associations, among other activities, send delegations to industrial concerns demanding an end to the pollution of the Then-Pennar river by chemical effluents.

Doctors offer both medicines and services free of charge, during health camps and eye-treatment camps. Volunteers of the Science Forum organise educational, cultural and sports activities for the children of the villages.

The total involvement of the AIEP staff in the day-to-day problems of the villagers and their prestige and popularity in the community are easily discernible. At the request of the AIEP director, a garland-maker in the centre of the town agrees to employ several destitute women for a nominal payment.

In another such gesture, the principal of the local college assists the AIEP by deploying a team of students under the National Service Scheme to assist villagers and AIEP volunteers to lay a road to one of the interior villages.

Teacher-trainees are mobilised to conduct a survey in the tribal colony on the hill and AIEP volunteers construct a shed for the tribal women for shelter during confinement.

The goodwill and support of local businessmen and philanthropic associations such as the Rotary Club, Jaycees Club and Lions Club have also been mobilised by the AIEP director for Krishnagiri. As a result, there is no dearth of sponsors for the various activities that are organised. "So you don't really need lots of money", he points out. The AIEP runs its many activities on a relatively small budget.

The growth of the AIEP has however not been painless. In one instance, the resentment of a group of youngsters was converted into an opportunity to mobilise people by the perceptive AIEP field officials. They suggested avenues through which the young people could participate and contribute in the area's overall development. Today the village of Turinjipatti has a Youth Club which is the centre of many educational and cultural activities.

The AIEP office is aptly named, the Multi-Purpose Resource Centre. This is where the villagers have their petitions for drinking water supply, roads, bus routes, etc. drafted and sent to the authorities.

This is also where the hesitant father and the confident volunteer alike bring in young school drop-outs and request the AIEP director to enroll them in some useful training programme of trade. Their request is promptly complied with. It is suggested, "Let the older girl join the tailoring class. The younger one has studied upto class VIII, let her enroll in the training for Early Childhood Education. Send both in tomorrow morning. They must bring their lunch. They can take the bus from Natrampatti. There will be many others coming to the Centre". Any further anxious questions from the parent are also answered patiently and the grateful visitors leave sure of the future.

In eight year since its inception, 76 Education and Development Centres and 28 sub-centres have been set up by motivated volunteers. School drop-out, students, working children and adults frequent these centres. As the early childhood care and education (ECCE), and the non-formal education (NFE) programmes, were suffering because of inadequate infrastructure, the AIEP centres became the centres for all these activities. Orientation and training programmes for Child Welfare Officers, for primary school teachers on Minimum Levels of Learning, and voluntary running of NFE programmes, are some of the activities held here.

In addition, this is the hub for a variety of skill-enhancement programmes: doll-making, tailoring, carpentry, even motor winding. AIEP has also started employment generating activities such as mushroom cultivation, type-writing and fibre-based handicrafts in the area.

AIEP volunteers helped to conduct literacy surveys and baseline studies in the villages and tribal areas and persuaded young school students to motivate adults to learn to read and write. Intensive enrolment drives were conducted for primary schools, as a result of which three-quarters of the primary schools have achieved 100 per cent enrolment in their catchment areas. In the rest, over 95 per cent enrolment has been achieved. The AIEP has motivated many drop-outs to appear for the School Leaving Certificate examination via the Open School System in the last years.

Not having access to the prescribed primers for non-formal education, the AIEP staff developed their own primer. Motivational cultural programmes, songs, dances, skits and street plays, support dying cultural forms like "therukoothu" (street lays) amongst other activities.

Another important aspect of the AIEP is the organising of micro-level planning meetings in the villages, designed to involve the villagers actively. The AIEP director also convenes block-level meetings to which he invites most of the prominent persons in the community.

Of the many grass-roots level workers of the AIEP, a large number are young women who radiate confidence and are motivated by the personal example and involvement of the director. Further, the AIEP in Krishnagiri is by no means a 9-to-5 job. It extends beyond the office hours and spills through the weekends.

The nature of the work is demanding and is effective because of the culture which places a premium on flexibility and non-bureaucratic administration. In addition, the field level officials personally select their staff. This is an important factor ensuring the quality of the work-force.

Asked what is the secret of the success of the AIEP, the project director smiles and is at pains to explain that it is the involvement of the people. At the same time, he refers to his own activist background in the Tamil Nadu Science Forum, saying that it was the inspiration derived from the dedicated voluntary work of co-activists and the simplicity which characterised their service that motivated and sustained him.

He emphasises that it is basically the desire to help activate social change that ensures the dedicated work of these people.

## **Project Document**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **1. The Context**

Education has made big strides in the country since Independence. The progress achieved since the National Policy on Education (1986) has been particularly impressive in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Nevertheless, disparities and inequalities in the access to and quality of education continue to plague the education system.

The National Policy on Education (1986) states, "education in India stands at the crossroads today. Neither normal linear expansion nor the existing pace and nature of improvement can meet the needs of the situation... In the Indian way of thinking, a human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care, coupled with dynamism". There is obviously an urgent need to redesign education strategies and execute them with meticulous planning and sensitivity in order that the human resources may realise their full potential for both individual growth and national development.

## **2. National Policy on Education and Programme of Action**

The essential elements of this educational transformation and renewal have been clearly indicated in the national Policy Statement and The Programme of Action (1986) for implementing the Policy. The main thrust is to strengthen the base of the education pyramid while at the same time ensuring the quality of education of those at the top.

## **3. Measures Suggested to Achieve this Goal Include**

*inter-alia:*

- removal of disparities and promotion of equality by providing equal opportunity to all, not only in access but also in the conditions for success;
- universal enrolment and retention of children upto 14 years of age through (a) decentralised planning, (b) participatory involvement of teachers and communities and (c) non-formal education approaches;
- improvement in the quality of education using a childcentred approach and improved teacher education;
- an integrated approach to early childhood (0-6 years) care and education, recognising the holistic nature of child development;

- a national system of education based on a national curricular framework comprising a common core along with other flexible components;
  - a large and diversified programme of adult and continuing education; and
  - women's education programmes to bring basic changes in their status, and to remove disparities.
4. The Programme of Action (1986) stresses the following time bound targets, specifically to strengthen the base of the pyramid.
- (a) Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to cover 70% of children in the age group 0-6 years by the year 2000.
  - (b) Universal Primary Education by 1990 and universal elementary education by 1995 with specific emphasis on the coverage of SC/ST and girls.
  - (c) National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) covering 40 million by 1990 and another 60 million by 1995.
  - (d) Adult Education for Women (estimated at 68 million in the age group 15-35 years) by 1995.
5. To achieve these physical targets and qualitative changes in the goals set above, massive mobilisation of resources is needed at all levels. It also requires the combination of long tested strategies in education, the experiences of the past two decades and the fruits of educational innovations.

## **II. Some Significant Educational Innovations**

6. Since 1971, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (formerly Ministry of Education and Social Welfare) and NCERT/D.A.E., in collaboration with the States/Union Territories and, in cooperation with UNICEF, has gained considerable experience in implementing innovative educational projects. The projects were designed to meet the educational needs of the most deprived and underprivileged

groups in the context of early childhood care and education and universalisation of primary education. The projects are listed below:

- (a) Developmental Activities in community Education and Participation (DACEP);
- (b) Primary Education Curriculum Renewal (PECR);
- (c) Comprehensive Access to Primary Education (CAPE);
- (d) Nutrition, Health Education and Environmental Sanitation (NHEES);
- (e) Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Children's Media Laboratory (CML);
- (f) Integrated Education for the Disabled (IED);
- (g) Educational Media; and
- (h) Adult Literacy Programmes, specially for Women.

These projects have been assisted by UNICEF within the framework of the master Plan of Operations 1970-75, 1976-80, 1981-85 and 1985-89.

The Projects (a), (b), (c) & (d) have completed their full cycle and have been discontinued. However, the experiences gained through them have been of benefit to educational programmes in general. The material developed under these projects will be utilized for AIEP. It will be backed up by training of the users.

### **Project Experiences**

Comprehensive internal and external evaluation of the projects have been brought out following strengths and weaknesses.

#### **7. Strengths**

- (a) Overall educational needs of the community should be viewed in their totality and the learning process viewed as a continuum, from before birth to adulthood and beyond.

- (b) Community-based projects like ECE, DACEP and NHEES generate considerable popular support and participation.
- (c) Conscientisation of people helps in accelerating the process of change and development.
- (d) People's participatory planning and management help in achieving optimum progress and in reducing the dichotomy between education and development.
- (e) Coordination between various developmental agencies and programmes when achieved, helps to maximise the impact of each of these individual projects and also to evoke greater people's response.

## 8. Weaknesses

- (a) The projects are geographically dispersed because of which the impact is limited. There is no spread effect noticeable in the adjoining areas.
- (b) Divergent approaches and at times overlapping activities of different projects fail to demonstrate their complementarity.
- (c) Multiplicity of programmes has led to duplication of efforts on the one hand and left gaps on the other.
- (d) There has been lack of programme coordination and operational linkages between various project teams at the Central and State/Union Territory levels. This has resulted in the projects approaching the common clientele from different angles, creating confusions and contradictions.
- (e) The projects are confined to very small areas. The visibility is poor and spirit of the experiment has not made much impact on the education system. The projects were seen mainly as good experimental initiations by the SCERT and not owned by the state governments in the true sense. They had not been incorporated in the regular educational system of the state.

9. The experience of these projects call for an area-intensive approach in the educational programmes, linked to the development of human resources of all sectors of the population of that area. This would be an effective strategy for bringing the educationally most backward sections of the population into the mainstream of education.

### **III. The Present Project**

10. The 'Area-Intensive Education Project for Human Resource Development (AIEP)' was started in 1987/88 in five States and one Union Territory. It has been designed within the framework and goals of the national Policy on Education and on the basis of strategy suggested in the Programme of Action and the GOI-UNIEF Plan of Operations. During the past three years, valuable experiences have accrued from the project. There has been a change in the perception of authorities regarding the whole domain of education. The long term implications and outcomes of the project in educational development are being realised. The authorities are working out with sincerity the linkages between education and socio-economic development and their interdependence is being realised. Efforts are being made to avoid duplication and promote coordinations between different activities for which committees have been formed. The committees are becoming aware of their roles as planners and promoters for their own development. Village level Coordination Committees are promoting motivational and awareness programmes. In the detailed micro-plan exercise which has been attempted in each village, new parameters for reframing the priorities in education to meet local aspirations are being evolved. The school is extending its role and is becoming the centre for community learning. In addition to this, better school community relationship is being worked out.

### **11. General Objectives**

The project has been formulated to achieve universalisation of primary education in ways relevant to the life of the community. It focusses on improving the school and relevance of education as well as mobilising community support to further these endes.

## **Primary Objectives**

- (a) To design and try-out as a part of the strategy for implementation of the National Policy on Education, a comprehensive Area-Intensive Education Project for Human Resource Development for all sections of the population in the selected geographic areas specially in the context of 'Education For All'
- (b) To achieve universal primary education in ways relevant to the life and development of the target community.
- (c) To establish complementarity in pre-school, formal, primary, non-formal and adult learning activities in the community preferably located in the same premises.

## **Related Objectives**

- (a) to develop and arrive at various methods of mobilising community's participation in educational programmes;
- (b) to evaluate and make available the experiences of the project for incorporation into the long-term global education strategy.

## **12. Specific Objectives**

- (a) to provide Early Childhood Care and Education to all children (including those with disabilities) in the age group of 3-6 years in the area;
- (b) to achieve by 1995 Universalisation of Primary Education for all children in the area particularly girls and disabled children by providing access to formal and non-formal education facilities and their retention upto 11 years of age;
- (c) to provide access to learning opportunities for illiterate/semi-literate, neo-literate adults in the age group 15-40 years;
- (d) to develop innovative educational programmes, teaching and learning material, teaching strategies and evaluation practices;

- (e) to build a cadre of animators and teachers who will be able to bring the community and the learning process together; and
- (f) to involve the community in planning and execution of educational and developmental activities.

### **Related Objectives**

- (a) to weave the educational and developmental activities at various levels for speedier Human Resource Development;
- (b) to develop and impart short-term training to teachers/animations and NFE, Adult Education instructors etc, to establish suitable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for assessing changes in awareness, activities and behaviour of the community.

### **IV. Key Components**

13. The successful implementation of the project rests on the following six key components

- (a) Area-intensive Approach*

This is in line with the area-specific and population-specific planning stressed in the Programme of Action of the National Policy on Education. It is now accepted that learning is to be viewed as a continuum, closely linked at all stages to the social, ecological and developmental needs of the population. The project lays emphasis on a holistic approach to educational intervention. Learning activities will be linked to the needs of all sections of the population. In view of the targets set in the National Policy on Education, the unit of Area is taken as Development Block. This is expected to provide a representative and sizeable target group, and a viable and replicable model for wider diffusion. However, experience has shown that work in one development block does not make a project very visible and effective. It may, therefore, be necessary to extend the area of operation to contiguous blocks even extending up to a district, provided needed resources in terms of infrastructure and financial funds are available. The villages in the block will constitute

sub-units. The project will cover all the villages and communities in the selected areas.

(b) *Convergence of Activities and Resource Inputs*

The key to the success of the project depends largely upon the convergence of educational activities (ECCE, formal school, NFE and AE) and establishing linkages with other government development departments. The mechanism to achieve this is a micro-plan. In a micro-plan the village community identifies the factors that prevent the people from participating in education. It selects certain factors within its control that it can overcome either by activating and adapting existing resources or planning for new ones. The consolidation and integration of village micro-plans makes a block plan. The block plan reflects priorities, needs and works out and operational frame for fulfilling its objectives. The plan reflects the possibility of utilising resources either locally to the community or provided by the block, state and central governments. These resources could be material i.e. the NFE Centre, human i.e. skill training in an incomegenerating activity or monetary i.e. a village contingency fund.

(c) *Community Participation in Decentralised Planning and management*

The character of the project is evident from both the area-intensive approach and micro-planning approach as community-based. The success of the project depends upon the participation of the community in all stages of planning and implementation. The village level committee is the planning and executing body of the project in the village. It would also mobilise people's participation in their own development accouding to the targets set by it for this purpose. It is resonsible for decentralised planning, programme operation and management. The extent of decentralistion is dependent on the compatibility of such decentralisation with the existing adminstrative structure in the state and the local community to perform the assigned tasks. The degree of decentralisation will vary from area to area.

(d) *Flexibility*

The evaluation of the ongoing projects has shown that the best conceived projects tend to get routinised and cease to inspire or respond to local interests or talents. It is, therefore, essential to keep the targets fixed for the project flexible enough to adapt them to the local situation even while maintaining the essential educational orientation of the project. There should be more flexibility with regard to planning, selection of objectives, methods of programme organisation, evaluation and so on. It is possible to encourage local initiative with the people together with the project personnel who are able to manage the project both conceptually and administratively. They must be trained to develop these capabilities. Along with this, it is necessary to shorten and loosen the chain of operational control. This would facilitate quick-decision and action in response to the local situation. In addition, it will help in imparting a sense of achievement among the participants. However, it would be borne in mind that flexibility should not be at the cost of the central objectives of AIEP.

(e) *Information and Media Support*

This is crucial to raise the awareness level of population and motivate their participation. Media and communication support, such as TV, radio, distance learnings etc., can also serve as powerful educational inputs to precede more formal interventions. Constant dialogue should also be maintained by interpersonal communication between project personnel and community. Child to child and child to parent communications are powerful channels to be continuously explored.

(f) *Priority to Educationally Backward Areas and Population Sectors.*

In view of the central aim in the National Policy statement to reduce inequality and to equalise educational opportunities for those who are most deprived, the project will give the highest priority to those blocks which are educationally and socio economically most backward.

## V. Coverage

14. In order to improve the visibility of the project, it will be extended to one or two contiguous blocks or even to the entire district if the State Government is ready to provide the necessary infrastructural and other facilities and the UNICEF is prepared to allocate requisite funds for the purpose. The project may be extended to other states on demand. In all, 12-20 blocks will be covered over the next five years.

## VI. Expected Outcomes

15. I. Early stimulation and improved early learning opportunities for all children in the age group 3-6 years.
- II. Enrolment of all children in the age group of 6-14 years in formal school or non-formal education centres.
- III. Substantial reduction in the dropout rates.
- IV. Realising minimum levels of learning.
- V. 80% adults, particularly women in the age group 15-40 years, are made literate and continue education.
- VI. Improved health and early stimulation for all children in the age group 3-6 years.
- VII. Building up of a cadre of youth and animators in the community with leadership qualities and motivation.
- VIII. Encouraging and ensuring greater participation from women.

Besides these, more qualitative changes are also expected in the awareness of the community of their learning and developmental needs, positive attitudes and values towards continued learning and national development, improved physical quality of life, reduction in IMR, MMR and child mortality, better scientific outlook to health and family well being, improvement in environmental sanitation and availability of safe

drinking water, increased participation in social, economic and political activities, elimination of social evils and raising the status of women. Convergence of educational efforts through this Project would accelerate the pace of social and economic changes in the community.

## VII. Strategies

### 16. (a) *Selection of Blocks*

For the selection of blocks for AIEP the following broad criteria have been used:

- I. preference to educationally backward states;
- II. educationally most backward block in the states, especially those located in backward rural areas, hilly tracts, desert areas, predominantly tribal areas, etc.,
- III. availability of infrastructural facilities and human resources at the block level; and
- IV. areas covered by Operation Blackboard

The same criteria would be used in future also for selection of additional blocks or areas. In case of additional blocks contiguity will be an essential factor.

### (b) *Setting-up a Multi-Purpose Resource Centre (MPRC)*

The Centre will be manned by an experienced, full-time Coordinator. The status of the Coordinator would be high enough to facilitate the operation of the project and bringing together primary school teachers and adult and non-formal education workers. Besides possessing academic qualifications, person should have managerial abilities of a high order. It will have at least two full time academic staff who will be responsible for conducting baseline surveys, preparing block plans, organising training for block and village level functionaries, implementing, guiding, monitoring and evaluating the project. In case the project is extended over more than one block, the original block may be termed as the 'lead block'.

At least one more academic staff per block may be provided in the 'lead block' for conducting the training programmes and other programme-related activities:

(c) *Block Level Micro-Planning*

The block level micro plans will be prepared by the MPRC in active consultation with their administrative machinery and the local committee on the basis of the guidelines provided by NCERT. In addition to this, a bench Mark survey of all the villages with special reference to the education indices will also be carried-out in the first year of the project. The specific outcomes of each project will be assessed in relation to the bench mark survey.

(d) *Preparation of Learning and Training material*

Based on the materials already developed and tested by NCERT/ SCERT, appropriate learning and teaching materials will be adopted/ adapted. This will help to avoid loss of time and resources in developing totally new material. However, where needed, additional material will be developed to meet specific learning needs of the communities. In addition, a detailed practical guide book will be developed by NCERT for helping project personnel in implementing the project.

- (e) The available publicity facilities in the block should be used to disseminate the objective of the project and to inform the community about the implementation plans as well as the role of the community in it. The interaction exercise is necessary to secure the participation of the community. The specially if the local animator facilitates listening and viewing of the programmes and stimulates discussion.

(f) *Identification of Village level Coordinators/ Animators*

The project is community oriented. This includes both the activisation of community resources for the project as well as acting as the agent to provide set roles so that liaison with government machinery is maintained. The village level animator must be a person having good rapport with the community as well as some

access to the administrative machinery. In each village there should be atleast one animator, though a team of two persons; a man and a woman would be preferred.

(g) *Setting up of Cordination Committees*

Soon after the bench mark survey is complete coordination committees at various levels may be set up. The composition of these committess is given in Section VIII.

(h) *Training/Orientaion of Personnel*

This will need to be organised in three tiers as follows:

- i. Village-level personnel at Block level;
- ii. Block and district-level personnel at State level (by SCERT or an equivalent institution); and
- iii.State-level personnel at NCERT.

(i) *Material and Financial Resources*

An attempt will be made to utilise the equipment and other supplies that have been provided by UNICEF - assisted projects as well as the government programmes. In case additional supplies are necessary, they would be provided. This would depend upon the baseline survey, need assessment and project design.

The community is also expected to contribute in this project. This could be in cash or in kind. The nature and extent of community's participation will vary from area to area.

Financial assistance provided under the government/nongovernment programmes including UNICEF-assisted projects will be pooled to the extent possible for the implementation of the micro-plans. If necessary, additional funds, will be provided in the initial period to cover the essential needs of the project.

Experience of DACEP indicates that a provision of appropriate contingent fund at the block level under the supervision of the

B.D.O. to meet the day-to-day expenses of the project and to smoothen operation and speed up programme implementation. Provision would be made to place at the disposal of EDC a contingent fund.

(j) *Project Operation*

The project should begin as soon as the preparatory steps have been completed (1991).

(k) *Supervision and Guidance*

The project offers a new philosophy. It is, therefore, essential to provide necessary guidance to the project personnel as well as to set up suitable supervisory structure to increase the effectiveness of the project. In order to ensure that the community has its say in programme supervision, village activities will be supervised by a village coordination committee.

At the block level supervision will be exercised through the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and the District Education Officers (DEO). Additional guidance in this regard will be provided by the SCERT. NCERT will also assist by providing academic support as well as by preparing guidelines for supervision, monitoring, documentation and reporting procedures. In addition, experienced persons preferably from the local area and NGOs should also be involved to provide guidance to the project as well as to serve as a link between NCERT and the State Government concerned.

I. *Monitoring and Evaluation*

The impact of the project will be periodically assessed and the concurrent evaluation will be used to provide the necessary mid-course corrections. At the same time the project will be monitored on a regular basis to find out if it is run in the right direction and the supplies are being properly utilised. Summative evaluation or the evaluation of the outcomes, preferably by some external agency, towards the end of the project will serve as an input in working out future policy direction.

## VII. Coordination

17. The programme is designed in a manner that it requires coordination not only towards different sections of the education programme but also towards different state government departments. Coordination among different departments has proved to be very difficult to achieve.

It has been decided to have coordination committees that will serve as a venue for sharing information and solving problems. In order to reinforce coordination at the grassroots level, committees have been set up from the village to national level.

### (a) *National Level*

Committee composed of representatives from Ministries of Human Resource Development, Health, Social Welfare, Rural Development and other development departments as required, NCERT and UNICEF - Convened by NCERT.

### (b) *State Level*

Committee composed of representatives from the Ministries of Education, Rural Development, Health, other development departments, NCERT and UNICEF - Convened by SCERT.

### (c) *District Level*

Committee chaired by the District Collector/Deputy Commissioner and consisting of representatives from the departments of Education, Rural Development, Health, Social Welfare, other development departments, BDO of the selected block, local bodies and NGOs, Heads of Panchayats-Convened by D.E.O/Principal, DIET.

### (d) *Block Level*

Committee chaired by BDO and consisting of representatives from the departments of Education, Rural Development, Health, Social Welfare and other development sectors, local bodies and NGOs, Head of Panchayats - Convened by Coordinator, MPRC.

(e) *Village Level*

Committee consisting of the Head of the Panchayat, field level officials, people's representatives, functionaries of various programmes, teachers/instructors and a block representative-Convened by Incharge, Village Education and Development Centre.

## **IX. Management**

18. The administrative structure is envisaged in five tiers: the Village, the Block, the District, the State and the National Levels.

(a) *Village Level*

An Education and Development Centre (EDC) will be established in each village. In very large villages comprising many hamlets, there may be more than one E.D.C.. it will be staffed by at least one man/woman, drawn from existing institutions as far as possible. it may be located in, or have close linkages with, the local school and will serve as a coordinating institution. It will be responsible for preparing the village plan, implementation of activities, ensuring people's participation, coordinating programmes and maintenance of records. As an incentive it will issue certificate to people who have completed five years at the E.D.C. Suitable financial resources should be provided in the project budget for the remuneration of the staff and contingent expenditure.

(b) *Block Level*

The MPRC will be the nerve centre of the project. It will be responsible for administering and monitoring project implementation, ensuring that areas of the block and all sections of the population get attention as planned, maintaining records and providing regular feedback reports.

The staff of the MPRC and other block level staff, in addition to their responsibilities, will each adopt about five villages and work closely with them, in order to ensure that no village lags behind. Such close field contact will be particularly valuable in mobilizing

resources for planning, curricular and material development, and in establishing linkages among various development agencies.

*(c) District Level*

The principal, DIET/DEO will provide overall administrative and operational support to the BDO and MPRC in the project implementation. This assistance will be particularly valuable in mobilizing resources for planning, curricular and material development, and in establishing linkages among various development agencies.

*(d) State Level*

The SCERT/equivalent body of the State/Union Territory along with the state department of education will be directly responsible for overseeing all aspects of project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and eventual replication in the wider educational system in the state. The SCERT will have special responsibilities to assist the MPRC in collating and developing learning and teaching materials, organizing training activities and designing evaluation tools. One senior officer in the SCERT should be specifically designated for the project duration. He/she will be helped by the members of the other related projects.

*(e) National Level*

I. *Policy Planning Group*

A high level group consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, NCERT and UNICEF, will meet once in, say, three months to review project progress and take key policy and administrative decisions.

II. *Project Implementation-Unit*

The Department of Pre-School and Elementary Education (DPSEE) of the NCERT will be responsible for all aspects of project implementation and management. For this purpose a special unit will need to be created under the Head of DPSEE,

staffed with adequate academic personnel, preferably at the rate of one project officer for one or two blocks, and needed support staff.

## **X. Responsibilities**

19. Based upon the project operation described above the responsibilities at the National, State and UNICEF levels can be summarised as below:

### **National Level**

#### *Ministry of Human Resource Development*

- a) Since education is a concurrent subject, the Ministry could, from time to time, issue directives to the state governments to promote the project.
- b) The ministry could also help in the removal of administrative bottlenecks which sometimes bog down the project.
- c) The strategies followed by this project in respect of micro-planning, community mobilisation, coordination intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral may be extended fruitfully to further educational programmes.
- d) The micro-plans drawn up for the villages cover both educational and developmental activities. Authorities might consider using them for their own ends. The state governments may be directed to consider the project as main stream rather than peripheral activity of the education programmes.

### **NCERT**

As the implementing agency at the national level the NCERT will be responsible for the following:

- Providing a team of academic and administrative staff to the Department of Pre-School and Elementary Education (DPSEE);
- development and dissemination of conceptual and guidance material;

- Overall planning, execution and monitoring of the project at the national level;
- training of state and district level key-personel;
- providing academic and key support to States/Union Territories.
- assessing and ensuring the timely supply of equipment and material needed for the project through UNICEF and other sources;
- providing opportunities for exchange of experiences between states through national and regional conferences and interstate visits;
- maintaining liaison with UNICEF, Ministry of HRD and States/ Union Territories;
- baseline/situational analysis and evaluation of the project; and
- discharging clearing-house functions.

### **State Level**

The State Department of Education will implement the project through SCERT/or its equivalent and will be responsible for:

- overall planning and execution of the project at the state level;
- monitoring and supevision at different levels;
- developing/translating guidance material and their dissemination;
- training of project personnel at district, block and field levels;
- providing funds for construction and repair of school buildings, furniture and equipment;
- meeting travel cost of all staff involved in the project;
- paying freight charges for UNICEF supplies and equipment, and runing cost of UNICEF-supplied vehicles;

- providing the selected block with needed primary schools, adult education and pre-school education centres and nonformal education centres and non formal education centes for out-of school children;
- establishing linkages with various development departments in order to facilitate converagence of services in the project operational area;
- ensuring maximum community participation, especially of girls and women in project activities through suitable strategies and use of communication media;
- providing academic and technical support to project functionaries at different levels;
- ensuring continuous project evaluattion;
- maintaining liaison with NCERT, UNICEF/State offices and project functionaries; and
- discharging clearing-house functions at state level.

In addition to these, the SCERT/equivalent agency should see that officers posted in MPRC are not transferred at least of three years. In case an officer is due for promotion, it should be given there itself. Grants made by NCERT/State Government should be passed on to the MPRC immediately. The vehicle provided for the project should not be taken away as it affects supervision and weakens the implementation of the project. The allotment for POL made by the State Government should be made available to the MPRC regularly.

#### **UNICEF**

The Education Section of UNICEF assisted by the Zone and State Offices eill take on the following responsibilites:

- meet the cost of baseline survey for need indentification, training and orientation of project personnel and visits of project teams;
- provide equipment on a selective basis to the villages and MPRCs as determined by block plans (to be coordinated by NCERT);

- meet the cost of printing or reprinting learning, teaching and training material;
- provide one supervisory vehicle at each MPRC. Incase of expansion to contiguous blocks, within the selected districts, the need for additonal vehicle will have to be separately examined;
- provide partial financial support towards meeting the cost of consultants and other staff component at the national, state and block levels on the clear understanding that such financial responsibilities will be taken over by the State Govt./Union Territory concerned after 1995; and
- participation and help in project designing, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and documentation exercises at national and state levels.

## 13

# DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

### Introduction

The District Primary Education Programme guidelines were formulated in April 1993; since then there have been major developments in the evolution of DPEP. In December 1993 the Cabinet accorded its approval for the scheme in principle: in January 1994 the full Planning Commission approved DPEP as a centrally sponsored scheme. District projects were prepared in 42 districts spread over the seven states of Assam, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Planning process in these districts has been intensive and participative; the process has conflated theory and practice and extensively drawn up organisation like NCERT, NIEPA and IIMs. It would be a truism to say that DPEP planning processes have provided a valuable opportunity for NCERT/NIEPA to field test many of the pedagogical and management concepts that they have been developing over the years. The studies conducted as a part of the planning process have been of a path breaking nature; and learning levels of over sixty thousand students were tested as part of a baseline study with a rigorous sampling and pedagogic design, with a view to identify area-specific interventions in each of these districts. The Expenditure Finance Committee of the Government of India met in May 1994 and has approved details of the DPEP proposals and its financial parameters.

The loftiness of the objectives, the nature and intensity of the planning process, the integration of professional inputs, participative

planning and management, and the emphasis on capacity building have together rendered DPEP an exciting idea not only in the country but all over the world. DPEP has broken new paths in international cooperation, in that it belongs to the new genre of the developmental cooperation which emphasises sustainability, equity, local ownership and execution and is supportive of national policies in the education sector. DPEP is a homegrown idea in keeping with CABE guidelines, and its distinctiveness lies in that in spite of diversity of sources of funding, it is a national programme, intending to achieve UEE in a contextual manner with emphasis on participation and capacity building. Furthermore, many functions performed by funding agencies in the past like supervision and appraisal mission, have been vested with DPEP at the national level - in fact DPEP seems likely to emerge as an intermediary financial, technical and resource organisation which may will develop into an educational fund/bank for primary education development in the country.

In the light of these developments and in order to take into account the rich experience gained in the planning process, the DPEP guidelines have been revised. A comparision of this edition with the earlier edition, would make it obvious that the philosophy and approach of DPEP - *the weltanschaung* remain intact. What has been added are the financial parameters and details of the appraisal process.

DPEP is not an enclave project: it is a major and multifaceted programme seeking to overhaul the primary education system in the country. It is only befitting that in an evolving programme, the guidelines would continue to evolve; this edition reflects the present state of evolution.

## Basics

1.1.1 The National Policy of Education, 1986 (as updated in 1992) and the progeamme of Action, 1992 (POA) reaffirm the national commitment to Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Para 5.12 of NPE resolves that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality should be provided to all children upto 14 years of age before we enter the 21st century. The NPE also specifies in Para 5.5 that UEE has three aspects:

- (i) Universal access and enrolment;
  - (ii) universal retention of children upto 14 years of age; and
  - (iii) a substantial improvement in quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.
- 1.1.2 Right from independence India has persevered with the goal of UEE; even though substantial progress has been achieved, the goal still remains elusive. The additional participation in elementary education has to come from social strata and regions which are more difficult to reach. Therefore, the path that lies ahead in the march to UEE is more arduous; the journey ahead is a marathon calling for a higher intensity of effort and more systematic planning and implementation.

1.1.3 National experience with the pursuit of UEE had established the following:

- (i) *UEE is contextual.* The contextuality varies widely across the country. Even in States like Kerala where participation is near-universal much requires to be done in respect of quality and achievement. In such States the pursuit of UEE would be mainly in the areas of quality, facilities and achievement. In other States participation and demand aspects need more attention.
- (ii) *Contextuality entails local area-planning with disaggregated targets and decentralised planning and management.* Planning for UEE had hitherto been mainly at the national and state-level. Barring some States and Union Territories, these entities are too large and heterogeneous for effective planning; they cannot provide contextuality. Ideally the planning should be from below, right from the village upwards but given the objective conditions, a beginning has to be made with district as the unit of planning. The district plans are to be prepared through an intensive process of interaction with the local bodies, teachers and NGOs so that it is "owned" by all who are to be associated in implementation and it reflects the ground-level realities.

- (iii) *Resources are an important but not sufficient condition for achieving UEE.* A host of measures both financial and nonfinancial, both on the supply side and on the demand side, need to complement higher allocation of resources.
- (iv) *The strategies for UEE have hitherto emphasised, mainly access in terms of construction of class rooms and appointment of teachers. This has been inadequate and needs to augmented by.*
  - (a) a holistic planning and management approach which goes beyond implementation of a disjointed set of individual schemes, perceives the task of UEE in its totality, integrates all the measures needed to achieving UEE in the specific context of the district;
  - (b) this holistic planning should incorporate gender perspective in all aspects of the planning and implementation process and be an integral part of all measures need to achieve UEE.
  - (c) addressing the more difficult aspects of access, particularly access to girls, disadvantaged groups and out of school children;
  - (d) improving school effectiveness;
  - (e) strengthening the alternatives to schooling, particularly the non-formal education system;
  - (f) stressing the participative processes whereby the local community facilitates participation, achievement and school effectiveness;
  - (g) toning up teacher competence, training and motivation;
  - (h) stressing learning competence and achievement;
  - (i) stessing need for improved teaching/learning materials;
  - (j) streamlining of planning and management in respect of both routine and innovative areas; and
  - (k) Convergence between elementary education and related services like ECCE and school health.

**1.1.4** The District Primary education programme (hereafter referred to as the Programme) is based on the above national experience and seeks to operationlise para 7.46 of the POA, 1992 which reads as follows:

"Further efforts would be made to develop district specific projects, with specific activities, clearly defined responsibilities, definite time-schedule and specific targets. Each district project will be prepared within the major strategy framework and will be tailored to the specific needs and possibilities in the district. Apart from effective UEE, the goals of each project will include the reduction of existing disparities in educational access, the provision of alternative systems of comparable standards to the disadvantaged groups, a substantial improvement in the quality of schooling facilities, obtaining a genuine community involvement in the running of shchools, and building up local level capacity to ensure effective decentralisation of educational planning. That is to say, the overall goal of the project would be reconstruction of primary education as a whole in selected districts instead of a piecemeal implementation of schemes. An integrated approach is more likely to achieve synergies among different programme components."

**1.1.5** The Programme also builds upon the experience gained in

- (i) the implementation of the Bihar Education Project (with UNICEF assistance) and the Lok Jumbish Project (with SIDA assistance);
- (ii) the planning of basic education project in Uttar Pradesh (with IDA assistance);
- (iii) the implementation of the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (with ODA assistance), Shiksha karmi Project (with SIDA assistance) and Mahila Samakhya (with Dutch assistance).

In BEP and UP projects too, investment is concentrated in the chosen district specific investment is complemented by a few State level

interventions such as strengthening of State level institutions. Where the Programme goes beyond the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar projects is in

- (i) the emphasis of local area planning with the district plans being formulated in their own right rather than being derived from a state plan project document.
- (ii) Greater rigour and infusion of professional inputs in planning and appraisal.
- (iii) More focussed targeting in that the districts selected would be:
  - (a) educationally backward districts with female literacy below the national average; and
  - (b) Districts where TLCs have been successful leading to enhanced demand for elementary education.
- (iv) More focussed coverage in that the Programme would focus on primary stage (Classes I-V and its NFE equivalent), with stress on education for girls, and for socially disadvantaged groups. In States where enrolment and retention is near universal in the primary stage, support can be considered for the upper primary stage.

- 1.1.6 The District Primary Education programme has been approved as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Government of India for Primary education development. As of now the process of planning has been completed for 42 districts in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The districts in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh have initiated the project planning process recently. The objective of the programme is to gradually extend the coverage to all the districts which satisfy one of the twin criteria referred to in para 1.5 (ii). The pace of expansion would depend upon the availability of resources and in states where the Programme is now being started on the pace and quality of implementation in the districts now chosen. The attempt would be to start the Programme in at least 110 districts in the Eighth Five Year Plan with an estimated outlay of Rs. 1950 crores of which Rs. 1720 crores are proposed to be drawn from external sources.

1.1.7 The programme would develop and implement in the districts selected a replicable, sustainable and cost-effective programme:

- (i) to reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than five per cent.
- (ii) to reduce overall primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10 per cent.
- (iii) to raise average achievement levels by at least 25 per cent over measured baseline levels and ensuring achievement of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40 per cent achievement levels in other competencies, by all primary school children.
- (iv) to provide, according to national norms, access for all children, to primary education classes (I-V), i.e. primary schooling wherever possible, or its equivalent non-formal education.

The programme would also strengthen the capacity of national, state and district institutions and organisations for the planning, management and evaluation of primary education.

1.1.8 The Programme would be implemented in a mission mode through registered state level autonomous societies. Each society would have two organs:

- (i) a General Council with Chief minister as ex-officio president; and .
- (ii) Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary/ Education Secretary of the State.

The executive responsibility will vest with the State Programme Director being the Member-Secretary of the Executive Committee and the Council. Government of India would be represented in the General Council and the Executive Committee. The plans would be formulated and implemented with the active association of the community, NGOs,

teachers and educationists. Therefore, all these groups would have to be provided adequate representation and voice in the management of the project at all levels; state, district, block and village. The Memorandum of Association and by-laws of Association of UP would serve as a model; however, district and sub-district structures would have to be developed by states to suit their administrative patterns and ethos.

- 1.1.9 The district plans would be rigorously appraised and their implementation systematically monitored.
- 1.1.10 Funds would be released from the Government of India to the State-level societies. GOI contribution is expected to be of the order of 85 per cent and is likely to follow the existing pattern for releases to IDA projects.
- 1.1.11 States would need to at least maintain the 1991-1992 expenditure levels on elementary education in real terms, excluding funds earmarked for DPEP as State share.
- 1.1.12 While the quantum of funding would depend upon the district plan and its appraisal, the over-all investment per district is expected to be within a ceiling of 30-40 crores per district. This is only a normative figure and the requirement of each district will vary. It must be borne in mind that DPEP is not a finance driven programme but seeks to build systems that are cost-effective, replicable and sustainable. The construction component would be limited to 24% and management cost to 6%. The recurring liabilities at the end of the Programme would be the exclusive responsibility of the State Government.
- 1.1.13 Appraisal would be with reference to the criteria of equity, participative processes, feasibility, sustainability and replicability. Details are spelt out in Table I.

**TABLE I**  
**Programme Criteria and Evidence**

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Equity focus	Focus on districts with low female literacy rates. Baseline beneficiary studies. Specific strategies for girls, SC/ST students.
Decentralisation	Action plans and budgets developed at the district level. Investment in district-level institutional capacity.
Participatory Planning	Village leadership, NGOs, District, Block and School level personnel involved in programme planning through consultations and workshops.
Technical Feasibility	Strategies are based on empirical evidence or experience, preferably in India.
Managerial Feasibility	Implementation by a registered society empowered to make financial, staffing and project design decisions. Plan for MIS development that meets GOI requirements. Acceptable plans for development of enhanced State capacity for textbook development, teacher training, management training, student learning assessment, and programme evaluation.
Financial Feasibility	States would need to at least maintain the 1991-1992 expenditure levels on elementary education in real terms, excluding funds earmarked for DPEP as State share. State share of annual programme costs are included in annual State budgets. Annual recurrent cost of the investment are shown to be sustainable on State Non-Plan budgets at the end of the project.

### **Financial Parameters**

**2.1 DPEP financing would be covered as per parameters set out below:**

#### **Additionality of DPEP Resources**

1. AS DPEP is externally funded it is subject to the parameters of external assistance approved by CABE at its 46th meeting held on March 8-9, 1991 and reiterated by its 47th meeting held on August 5-6, 1992. One of these parameters is that external funding should

be additional to the resources for education. This would, in operational terms, mean that DPEP cannot finance:

- (i) Salaries of sanctioned but unfilled post.
- (ii) Salaries of posts that should have been created as per the State Government norms such as teacher post that ought to be created as per the teacher-pupil ratio.
- (iii) Salaries of posts transferred to DPEP, e.g., if some of the functions relating to textbook Development are transferred along with posts to a Textbook Development Board to be financed by DPEP, the posts transferred would not be financed.

DPEP would finance coverage under State Government schemes only over and above the level that the state would itself cover each year.

#### **Safeguard of Investment in Elementary Education**

2. Inextricably linked to and flowing from the principle of additionality, is the need to safeguard existing expenditure on elementary education. This would help enable DPEP resource to remain an additionality. It is therefore a basic requirement of DPEP that at least 1991-92 levels of expenditure on elementary education are maintained in real terms.

#### **Utmost Parsimony in Expenditure**

3. The DPEP seeks to operationalise Para 7.46 of the Programme of Action 1992 which enjoins that an ethos of cost effectiveness and accountability should permeate every part of the education system. This ethos is all the more necessary for DPEP as it is largely financed by external debt. In operational terms this would mean, inter-alia, that administrative overheads should be a bare minimum (the 6% ceiling on administrative cost is a ceiling and not an entitlement). DPEP would not finance expansion of supervisory cadres, or activities having no proven direct educational salience.
4. The cardinal principle is that every proposal has to be appraised and found to conform to the criteria of relevance feasibility and sustainability.

## **Incentives**

5. DPEP would not finance non-educational incentives such as free uniforms, incentives for attendance, nutrition, etc. Only provision of free textbooks to girls, SC/STs would be financed in project districts in States which do not have such a scheme.

## **Convergence**

6. A central concern of the POA of 1992 is the convergence of the services such as primary education, health, ECCE etc. DPEP would prefer measures to promote convergence wherever such services exist rather than replicating the services. Thus DPEP would not finance setting up of ECCE Centres in villages covered under ICDS. Instead, it would seek to bring together the ICDS and the primary school. Likewise it would not seek to replicate medical services or supplies in schools but would facilitate diagnosis of learning disabilities through medical check-up of students and better linkages between PHCs and the schools. Activities and processes which would promote these convergence would be financed.
7. At another level convergence would be attempted amongst the various DPEP programme components and processes. An example is the convergence of reduction of academic burden (cf. Yashpal Committee); MLL, multigrade teaching, gender sensitivity, training, development of instructional materials and learners evaluation. Another is involvement of VECs in the setting-up, facilitation and supervision of NFE centres.

## **Phasing and Innovation**

8. Basic to the DPEP is the premise that there are large "unknown" areas that are crucial to the achievement of UEE. Innovation, which is critical to DPEP, entails systematic trial, evaluation, scaling and phasing. It would be expedient to move systematically and in a phased manner. Programme implementation can begin with core known programme components and progressively add on more and more components. All new programmes, and strategies that have been either untested or are still at a nascent stage need to be systematically planned and their implementation staggered.

### **Local Area planning**

9. DPEP stresses participative process whereby the local community would play an active role in promoting enrolment, retention, achievement and school effectiveness. This process would be institutionalised through the Village Education Committee and bodies like Mother-Teacher Associations. In line with this approach of participative decentralised planning DPEP would not fund supply of standardised packages of teaching-learning equipment, furniture and other materials to schools. Instead VEC and the school would be facilitated to improve the school facilities according to locally felt needs and priorities, through provision of an amount of Rs. 2000 per school per annum to be jointly operated by the VEC and school. In addition the school will be provided an amount of Rs. 500 per teacher to procure consumables and to develop, prepare and acquire low cost teaching aids.

### **State and District Component**

10. The State Component is intended to provide the resource and management backup for the implementation of the district components. The state component should therefore comprise activities having direct relevance to the district components. As already spelt out the state component would comprise, inter-alia, development of MIS, training modules and instructional material. The financing of the end-products of these developments would be limited to DPEP districts.

### **Inter-District Disparities**

11. The basic premise of DPEP is contextuality. Therefore the relative emphasis on access, equity, quality and achievement would vary from district to district. Therefore in appraisal the DPEP national management Structure expects interdistrict variations in programme components and investment pattern.

### **Systematic preparation**

12. The first year of implementation would focus on putting systems in place and setting processes in motion. This would include:

- formation of bodies like VECs, Mother Teacher Associations;
- Awareness building campaigns for providing the necessary institutional infrastructure for stepping up enrolment, retention and for facilitating performance of schools and NFE centres;
- building up the training infrastructure by strengthening capacity of DIETs, setting up Block Resource Centres and school clusters;
- setting in motion processes such as development of training modules and materials, reduction of academic burden and improving the efficiency in production and distribution of learning materials.

### National Components

13. Greater clarity has emerged on the national component and on the overall programme design. The national components are now perceived to comprise:
- (i) setting up of management structure at the National level
  - (ii) Development of MIS
  - (iii) Technical assistance to DPEP States in Project Planning and Management
  - (iv) Technical assistance in Pedagogy. This will include among other things.
    - rationalization of academic burden (as per Yashpal Committee)
    - development of prototype training modules,
    - programme for teaching numeracy and reading skill, etc.
  - (v) Programme Evaluation and Research
  - (vi) Appraisal, Supervision and Monitoring arrangements for DPEP.

## **Programme Design**

14. The programme design broadly encompasses the following inter-related and mutually reinforcing areas:
- (i) Building institutional infrastructure for action research, training and academic supervision through augmenting/networking/setting up of institutions at the national, state, district and sub-district levels;
  - (ii) Building community support for primary education through institutions like VEC, MTA and setting in processes such as awareness campaigns, micro-planning and training of the functionaries of VEC, MTA;
  - (iii) Enhancing school effectiveness in terms of its reach (enrolment), grasp (retention), classroom transaction and learning achievement;
  - (iv) NFE systems to reach out to those who would be still left in spite of efforts to enhance school effectiveness;
  - (v) Convergence of ECCE, primary schooling and health;
  - (vi) Programmes and process with a focus on girls, SCs and STs.

## **ECCE**

15. DPEP would finance expansion of ECCE through establishment of ECCE centres in villages not eligible to be covered by ICDS. In states with limited experience of ECCE, new ECCE centres would be financed initially on a limited scale only, in one district, or in one block per district, where inter-district variations are substantial. This activity could be scaled up gradually over the project period. The DPEP would not finance nutrition.
16. In order to improve the quality of ECCE, DPEP would finance development of pre-school materials and training of functionaries in the ECCE centres set up under DPEP. It would also finance the training of ICDS Anganwadi/Balwadi workers in forging linkages with schools.

**NFE**

17. DPEP would strive for the development of an effective NFE system which can meet the diverse educational needs of children whom the school, in spite of all the measures designed to improve its effectiveness, would not reach. To this end, DPEP would finance:
- (i) to begin with, NFE centres as per the GOI scheme in states which are not covered by that scheme.
  - (ii) development of a variety of NFE models;
  - (iii) extension coverage of viable and scalable NFE models and instructional material;
  - (iv) production and distribution of material for NFE programmes financed by DPEP in project districts.
  - (v) training related to NFE financed by DPED.

**Educational Planning and Management**

18. DPEP would finance, subject to a ceiling of Rs 3 crores, strengthening of state capacities in the area of educational planning and management which could include inter-alia, setting up of a separate SIEMT, augmenting state level structures such as SCERTs by creation of additional units for this purpose or contracting services of existing resource institutes in the state such as IIMs for training, research and related activities.

**Salaries**

19. Financing of salaries would be on a declining basis, that is to say beginning with 90% in the first two years, declining to 80% for the third, fourth and fifth year, and 65% in the sixth and seventh year of the project. The average works out to 75% of the salaries.

In terms of these guidelines DPEP would finance teachers' posts in new schools being financed by DPEP. Depending on the practice in State, construction of school building can either precede or follow the opening of a school. It is expected that as a result of the

- interventions in DPEP there would be substantial improvement in enrolment. Therefore, with effect from third year of the project, teacher posts would be financed on a school to school basis where the extra enrolment and the teacher-pupil ratio (with reference to the first year of the project) warrant such appointment.
20. DPEP would finance new posts created in institutions set up under DPEP such as ECCE centres, Block Resource Centres, school clusters and State Institutes of Education and management, and in the State level societies and their units in the districts.
  21. DPEP would also finance extra posts created in existing institutions such as DIET, SCERT for assisting DPEP.
  22. However the salaries of existing state government officials holding positions in DPEP on an ex-officio basis and salaries of supervisory and administrative staff at secretariat, district and sub-district level will not be financed by the DPEP. Wherever amalgamation or upgradation of existing structures is proposed, state government's commitment towards meeting salaries of existing posts would be carried over so that DPEP finances salaries of only additional staff.

### Civil Works

23. DPEP will finance civil works (limited to 24% of project cost) such as construction of new primary schools, new class rooms, major repairs and rehabilitations of schools, construction of toilets, residential schools, rooms at ECCE centres, water supply and electrification, SIEMT, and other state educational facilities as approved by DPEP maintenance would be financed as per state norms and be within the 24% ceiling.
24. DPEP would not finance construction activities in aided or private schools, NGOs, other associations or groups.
25. Construction of offices would not be funded under DPEP barring office space for the State Society on a small scale within the SIEMT or SCERT only.

26. DPEP would finance construction of residential schools for Scheduled Tribes from the second year of the project onwards following proven evidence of demand from the community and independent evaluation of similar schools.

### **School Facilities**

27. Grants of Rs. 500 per teacher pro annum would be provided to the schools for teaching learning aids and consumables. Further, a grant of Rs. 2000 per annum would be provided jointly to each school and VEC for improving school facilities such as books and journals (other than textbooks), furniture, health check up, and bettering school environment, etc. No other financing would be provided to schools for equipment.
28. All new schools constructed under DPEP in the first instance would be provided with furniture as per state norms. Once established and functioning, they would also qualify for the grant for teaching learning aids and facilities as above.

### **Furniture and Equipment for other Institutions**

29. DPEP will finance equipment needed for state society offices, the district units of the societies, MIS cells in state and projects districts, in SEIMT, SCERT, BRC, school clusters and other educational facilities as justified in the proposals and approved by the DPEP. To begin with, no TVs/VCRs and audio visual equipments would be provided to institutions below the level of DIET.
30. Procurement procedures for all equipment to be acquired under DPEP have to conform to approved procedures, which would be spelt out shortly.

### **Improvement and Upgradation of Learning Content, Processes and Materials**

31. DPEP will finance a design for learning processes and materials based on rationalization and reduction of academic burden (as recommended by Yashpal Committee Report); principles of

minimum Levels of Learning; and multi-grade teaching concepts. DPEP financing for this purpose would be limited to development of a design upto camera ready stage, only. Financing of printing of learning materials would be for the purpose of field trials only. Costs of distribution of learning materials would not be bore by DPEP.

DPEP would also finance:

- improving efficiency in the porcesses of production and distribution of teaching/learning materials.
- provision of free learning materials to SCs/STs and girls in project districts (if not already financed by State Government).
- printing and distribution (in project districts) of teachers handbooks and student workbooks (if not already financed by State Government).

#### **Awards/Incentives, etc.**

32. DPEP would not finance non-educational incentives for improving school attendance and retention such as midday meals, nutrition free uniforms,. It would also not finance cash scholarships/awards except an awards programme for schools that could be organised at block level with a view to promote competition amongst schools in areas such as enrolment and retention of girls, SCs/STs. That award winning school can use the award for acquiring educational material or facilities in the schools.

#### **Vehicles**

33. Vehicles can be provided under the project as follows:

State level: one vehicle for State Project Director, two vehicles for common pool, one for Director of SIEMT and one for common pool of SIEMT.

District level: One vehicle for District Programme Coordinator

and vehicles for common pool calculated at the rate of one vehicle for every four blocks;

One vehicle for DIET for academic supervision through BRCs and school clusters.

Procurement of vehicles should be staggered as per need.

### **Teacher Training**

34. DPEP would finance in project districts training of:
  - teachers of primary schools including private and aided schools;
  - pre-primary teachers/workers other than those under ICDS;
  - administrative staff;
  - VEC/MTA members and NGOs.
35. It would also finance, for use in DPEP districts, development and printing of training materials, development of training modules for teacher training, ECCE and educational management.
36. All pedagogic training modules should integrate as far as possible the MLL, multigrade teaching, gender sensitivity, environmental and other relevant concerns.

### **Innovations**

37. In order to encourage innovations at all levels, innovation funds would be set up at the district, state and national levels. Innovation fund would be provided according to the following scale:

In each DPEP district level, a fund of Rs 1 lakh per annum. The cost of a single project should not exceed Rs. 1 lakh; its duration should not exceed one year. This fund would be administered by the district unit of the State society.

At the state level, a fund of Rs. 20 lakhs would be provided per

annum. The cost of a single innovative project should not exceed Rs. 5 lakhs and its duration should not exceed two years.

At the nation level, a fund of Rs. 100 lakhs would be provided per annum. Each individual project should not cost more than Rs. 20 lakhs.

38. No diversion from these funds to other activities would be permissible. Innovative projects could be taken up from the second year onwards. NGOs, institutions like SCERTs, SIEMT, DIETs, BRCs, school clusters can be financed.

### **Other Programme Costs**

39. DPEP would also finance other programme costs, such as Consultant services, professional fees;
- Grants to NGOs and institutions like IIMs for support to programme activities;
- Research, evaluation studies, impact studies;
- Fellowships.

### **CAVEAT**

40. The above list is not exhaustive. As programme evolves and new activites come up, the eligibility for DPEP financing will be decided by the project approval board at the national level.

### **Planning Process**

- 3.1 Planning process and project formulation under DPEP is of great significance. DPEP emphasises location-specific planning in a participatory manner. In a sense there are some basic postulates which need to be borne in mind for DPEP planning processes, namely the "nine pillars". DPEP planning should include;
  - (i) Mobilization for UEE by activating village education committees, teachers, parents/guardians and linking up with efforts under the Total Literacy Campaign.

- (ii) Planning for primary education and not merely primary schooling. Alternative methods have significance and a holistic view be taken.
  - (iii) Cover all qualitative aspects such as school effectiveness, textbooks, teacher training and improvement in simple teaching and learning skills.
  - (iv) Convergence of services, such as primary education, primary health and ECCE to provide synergistic development.
  - (v) Provision for trainings to improve teacher motivation and classroom transactions, as also in management of education.
  - (vi) Openness to innovations which thrown up new solutions and once tested can be scaled up, or aborted if unsuccessful.
  - (vii) A marked gender focus to provide for improvement in access, retention and achievement levels of girls education, as also to permeate gender sensitivity through all aspects of DPEP planning, including teacher training/recruitment, textbooks other educational facilities and incentives.
  - (viii) The canvas of DPEP is systemic where the issue is one of management of change and improving of the system.
  - (ix) Evaluation, monitoring and research are interactive and supportive of DPEP. Studies and evaluations will play a major role in project planning and action research to facilitate decision-making.
- 3.2 The preparation of detailed district and state projects is the responsibility of the State Government under the programme. The projects should provide details of activities envisaged in the districts over the period of 7 years. The process by which the district/state proposals would be drawn up and approved for DPEP is indicated as follows:
- A. Identification of districts according to DPEP criteria

- B. Approval of district selections by DPEP
- C. Appointment (if not in place) of District Planning Teams
- D. Appointment (if not in place) of State Planning Teams
- E. Preparation of preliminary district plans/proposals and cost estimates of eligible activities according to DPEP criteria and guidelines.
- F. Preparation of state proposals for capacity building.
- G. Preliminary appraisal of district/State proposals by DPEP
- H. Once State/district proposals are ready they would be appraised and later monitored by GOI.

### **Components of the Programme**

3.3 The following activities could form the components of the Programme:

- (i) *Project preparation activities* illustrated above in para 2.2.1 above. The project formulation exercises, studies and surveys, training of planners as well as workshops for mobilisation of public opinion and consultations with various interested groups would be eligible for financing under this category.
- (ii) *Environment building activities*: Structures and fora could be evolved for a continuous process of consultations with parent-teacher groups, teachers' associations, elected representatives, Panchayati Raj institutions, and nongovernmental agencies could be devised to mobilise public opinion and to generate a demand and concern for educational development in the district.
- (iii) *Activities under Primary Formal Education*:
  - (a) Micro planning and school mapping to be taken up at village and block level within the district.
  - (b) Physical facilities for education like new school buildings and extension repair of the existing school buildings

through low cost indigenous materials, vernacular design and participative construction methods, subject to the state norms being adopted. (0.7 sq.m. of space per student and a classroom of 40 students), and cost of civil construction being limited to 24% of the total project cost.

- (c) Assessing the existing levels of equipments and teaching learning aids in a school and making provisions for them wherever inadequate and wherever not covered by State or central schemes.
  - (d) Streamlining the production and distribution of textbooks, NFE and ECCE materials and teachers' guides.
  - (e) Development of school libraries.
  - (f) Establishing the current level of MLL (Minimum Levels of Learning) within the district on a sample basis and make plans to reach prescribed MLL within a specified time frame.
  - (g) Assess the need for teachers, particularly in rural areas and provide for their recruitment, training and induction. Emphasis to be on lady teachers for rural areas and provide for their salaries as per DPEP financial parameters.
  - (h) Provision of free textbooks for the focus group of the disadvantaged (SC/ST/girl child).
- (iv) *Activities under Primary Non-Formal Education:*
- (a) Development of viable models of NFE for children out-of-school.
  - (b) Assessing the need for and location of new NFE centres.
  - (c) The recruitment and training of NFE instructors.

(d) The development of teaching and learning materials for NFE.

(e) To mobilise the community for the management and monitoring of NFE centres.

(v) *Activities under Early Childhood Care and Education:*

(a) Development of modules for child development and education.

(b) Convergence of ECCE facilities with ICDS and ECE programmes and primary schools in terms of coordination of timings, enrolment drives and health and immunization services.

(c) In non-ICDS areas, opening of ECCE centres and providing for induction and training of ECCE workers as well as teaching learning materials.

(d) Actions related to preparing the child for primary schooling like school readiness programme.

(vi) *Training:*

(a) Strengthening the teachers in-service training and development of new designs for such training;

(b) selection and training of master trainers and resource persons within the district.

(c) Training of educational administrators including district and block level functionaries and VEC members.

(d) Augmenting the DIETs

(e) Any other activity/facility required for continuous and updated training.

(vii) *Women's development:*

(a) Establishing specific activities for women's education.

- (b) providing for training and orientation of women functionaries and activists.
- (c) Training of women VEC members.
- (d) Initiation of awareness generation programmes.

(vii) *Management structures and MIS:*

- (a) The setting up of State level registered society and district and sub-district level management structures to ensure flexibility and promptitude in decision making and flow of funds.
- (b) The development and installation of an MIS system and facilities for data analysis. The system should be compatible with national system and should build upon school statistics, baseline studies and inputs monitoring.

3.4 Activities eligible at the state level for programme support would include those which seek to improve:

- (a) the efficiency of State textbook preparation, publication and dissemination;
- (b) effectiveness of inservice and preservice primary teacher training and education;
- (c) effectiveness of educational research, evaluation and monitoring and assessment.

3.5 At the district level, the eligible activities would include those which seek to improve:

- (a) District capacity for programme management, supervision, monitoring and evaluation;
- (b) the quality of primary education – formal and non-formal education; and
- (c) targeting of support for access to and benefit from primary education for girls, SC and ST students.

- 3.6 The programme also offers support to States in shaping State institutes of Educational Management and Training or equivalent institutional arrangements and strengthening of the District Institutes of Education and Training through equipment and staff development.
- 3.7 The District plans and State proposals for Programme support shall be prepared incorporating the principles of equity, feasibility, sustainability and replicability. The final outlay for each District would be determined after appraisal.
- 3.8 In keeping with the objectives of the Programme the formulation of the district plans would be through a process of capacity building rather than by entrusting the job as a turnkey assignment to consultants, institution or individual. Taking cognizance of the scarcity of project formulation skills the Programme envisages particular measures for strengthening state-level resource institutions and DIETs, networking of these institutions with NCERT and NIEPA on the one hand and with state level social sciences research organisation/IIMs/university departments on the other. Hitherto, the state level resource institutions were strengthened mainly with reference to teacher training. Hereafter equal emphasis would be laid on administration and management training for educational functionaries, NGOs and members of the VECs, district and sub-district project structure. One of the very first steps in project formulation would be to identify key level functionaries in the State Education Departments, SCERT and such organisations attached to Education Department, other State level organisations, and orient and then engage them in training state and district level functionaries. As far as possible the resource persons have to be drawn from a network of resource institutions so that they can help develop capabilities and be associated with the Programme on a long-term basis.
- 3.9 Each of the districts selected under the Programme would draw up a five to seven-year plan clearly spelling out:
  - (i) the present status of primary education;

- (ii) the gap to be bridged between the present status and the Programme objectives;
- (iii) the strategies;
- (iv) the programme components;
- (v) measures for securing convergence of primary education and related services like ICDS, ECCE and School health;
- (vi) phasing;
- (vii) unit costs;
- (viii) the sources of funding which would comprise the ongoing State and Central schemes and the additional educational interventions the Programme would fund;
- (ix) management structures;
- (x) arrangement for monitoring with clearly specified benchmarks and indicators.

3.10 Simultaneously a state level plan would be formulated to spell out:

- (i) the planning and management support for district planning and implementation;
- (ii) strengthening of resource institutions;
- (iii) linkages with state level social science research institutions/ IIMs, university departments, NCERT and NIEPA;
- (iv) training in pedagogy and management;
- (v) streamlining of textbook production and distribution;
- (vi) reducing the level of difficulty of language and mathematical learning materials;
- (vii) management information systems.

### **3.11 Project Preparation Activities**

**3.11.1** The following specific activities need to be taken up by States in the initial phase.

#### ***Organisational Activities***

- (i) Formation of core groups at State and district levels.
- (ii) Training of State and district level core group and other functionaries.
- (iii) Forging linkages between SCERT, state level social science research organisation/IIMs/university departments and NCERT/NIEPA.
- (iv) Identification of resource persons in this network of resource organisations.
- (v) Identification of State Project Director.
- (vi) Registration of State level societies.
- (vii) Framing of Financial/Procurement and Service Regulations of the Society.

#### ***Planning Activities***

- (viii) Organisation of conventions and workshops for wide consultation on the action plan with groups of teachers, community leaders, women activists, representatives of disadvantaged section of the society, the non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in the primary education system.
- (ix) Survey of school facilities, teaching-learning equipment.
- (x) Identification of schools to be constructed/repaired.
- (xi) Identification of the standard list of teaching-learning equipment that is to be provided.
- (xii) Preparation of action plan would need to be based on:

- (a) the current status of primary education in the districts selected, based on available data.
  - (b) a plan outlining the process for formulating the district projects.
  - (c) a programme for conducting the studies which need to be completed before pre-appraisal.
  - (d) an outline of the activities envisaged in the districts and at the state level with approximate unit cost, phasing, organisational arrangements for planning, implementation and monitoring.
  - (e) development of management structure for the programme.
  - (f) preparation of a construction manual.
  - (g) development of a training plan for management, teacher training and pedagogical development.
- (xiii) Local capacity building for professional inputs into the plan, preparation and assessment of plans.
- (xiv) Improvement and further refinements in the first draft, based on the findings of studies conducted (see below under "Studies") and processes.

### *Studies*

The studies to be conducted for project preparation would include:

- (i) Conduct benchmark surveys on key educational indicators like enrolment, transition, retention, minimum levels of learning.
- (ii) Conduct study on girls (gender perspective).
- (iii) Conduct studies to develop appropriated teacher training, methodology and design.

- (iv) Conduct studies on textbooks for education in areas predominantly inhabited by tribals.
- (v) Conduct studies on state finances.
- (vii) Studies on educational needs of disadvantaged groups of society like SC/ST.
- (viii) Such other studies as may be considered expedient.

Terms of reference and the methodology of the studies must be drawn up in consultation with the Government of India. The findings of the Studies would have significance for planning DPEP project interventions as well as initiating informed analysis amongst the many stakeholders in the primary education system. Hence arrangements will have to be made at the conclusion of the studies to disseminate its results through workshops at the state and district level. Sensitization to the issues at stake would encourage debate and local solutions would emerge.

3.12 Financial as well as technical assistance would be provided for project preparation and studies based on specific, well-delineated proposals.

3.13 The source of funding for implementation of the district plan and state level interventions would be:

- (i) on-going central and state schemes, and
- (ii) the funds the Programme would provide.

The Programme would fund all educational activities which lead to the strengthening of the primary education in the district as well as certain State level interventions. Though the final outlay for each district would be determined after appraisal it is anticipated that the average investment per district (inclusive of the district share of the state level interventions) would be within the ceiling of Rs 30-40 crores. Funding would be subject to a ceiling on the construction component, at 24 percent of the total project cost and a ceiling of 6 percent on management costs. This is to ensure that programme components receive a minimum of 70

per cent of the total project cost. The appraisal criteria would be equity, participatory process, feasibility, sustainability and replicability. States would have to clearly analyse the financial commitments involved in the project and their own ability to meet the recurring costs after the project period is over. The ability of the State Government to support the recurring liabilities of the Programme at the end of the Project period should be established.

### **3.14 Project Cycle**

After a state is identified for being covered up under DPEEP by the GOI, the State would be required to draw up State and District proposals. At the national level there would be a resource team to examine and appraise these proposals. This national resource team of appraisers would be joined by expert teams fielded by the external agency funding the programme. Appraisal Resource team will provide on-site technical assistance and appraisal for state and district proposals. Four missions would be conducted for each state: (1) Identification Mission at the identification of the State and Districts; (2) Preparation Mission at the initiation of project preparation; (3) Pre-appraisal Mission on completion of draft proposals; (4) Appraisal Mission on completion of revised proposals. The national resource team on appraisal will have expertise in educational planning and statistics, civil works, in-service training, community participation, programme management, special programmes for women/girls and SC/ST. Each visit will be for a duration of four weeks.

### **3.15 The process by which the district/state proposals would be drawn up and approved for DPEP is indicated as follows:**

#### **BEFORE IDENTIFICATION MISSION**

Identification of districts by the concerned State Government according to DPEP criteria.

Approval of district selections by DPEP bureau in GOI.

Collection of a consistent set of basic information for the identified districts/state in standard formats.

Identification of the District Planning Teams by concerned State Government.

Identification of State Planning Team

## DURING IDENTIFICATION MISSION

Identification Mission through a workshop and local visits will set the basic framework of planning;

Identify the issues and problems in the existing system;

Orient the district and state planning teams;

Set up the planning processes;

Identify studies that need to be conducted;

Identify State Resource team for conduct of each study;

Prepare the terms of reference of each study planned;

Identify the local institutional/human resources with a view to establish a network for use DPEP;

Identify the broad strategies to tackle the identified issues through group work of District and State Planning teams;

Identify the management structure for the project and other related issues.

## BEFORE PREPARATION MISSION

Participatory planning at block, subdivision and district level, their documentation for each district and block;

Refinement of issues in the light of community participation and documentation of strategies district and block wise. Mapping of school facilities;

Preparation of maps and information for school siting as per format;

Completion of the field works of Studies and availability of the raw data and first findings;

Preparation of first draft districts and state proposals with quantitative targets.

## DURING PREPARATION MISSION

Field Visits to districts and institution; the quantitative aspect of the proposals would be looked into with great care and detail, i.e; the targets set, the unit cost, time estimation for completion of an activity and the like;

Scrutiny of the first draft proposals with district and State Planning Teams with reference to;

Civil construction and site availability for such construction plans;  
Checking of the internal consistency of the proposals - component wise;

Existing capacity available within the district and State to carry out the Tasks set for themselves;

Current utilisation of the existing institutions for betterment of the primary education system;

Additionality of the activities proposed;

Feasibility of the activities proposed;

Sustainability of the activity proposed;

Sharing of the Preliminary Findings of the studies in a workshop with local community - preparation Mission Team to participate in one such workshop.

#### **BEFORE PRE-APPRAISAL MISSION**

Final report of Studies; completion of sharing of the studies in all the districts

Revision of preliminary district/state proposals and cost estimates for eligible activities according to DPEP criteria and guidelines, results of studies and recommendations of the preparation mission; Preparation of state proposals for capacity building

Preparation, in consultation with GOI, of:

Draft Memorandum of Association for the implementation Society; Draft bye-laws of financial regulations and procurement manual;

Draft service regulations;

Draft construction manual.

#### **DURING PRE-APPRAISAL MISSION**

Scrutiny of district proposals by DPEP. The quantitative aspects of the plan and therefore the costs of the district proposals would be finalised. The focus would shift on the operational aspects of plan implementation, like;

*Examination of construction process (Manual)*

Examination of draft rules and bye-laws of Society.

Examination of the financial and service regulations of the Society.

Examination of the Procurement rules for goods and services by the Society.

### **BEFORE APPRAISAL MISSION**

Finalise the proposals in accordance with earlier recommendations.  
Obtain necessary approvals for project management structure.  
Obtain necessary approvals for the rules, regulations and byelaws.

### **DURING APPRAISAL MISSION**

Appraisal would be document-based and no field visits are envisaged. The documents therefore need to be self contained and comprehensive. The practice of providing supplementary information at this stage would be discouraged. At appraisal stage it is expected that the interacting parties would come up with the agreements to be reached amongst themselves for implementation of the programme.

### **National Support and Monitoring**

#### **National Component under DPEP: An Overview**

- 4.0 The preparation of detailed district and state projects is the responsibility of the State Government under the programme. The projects would provide details of activities envisaged in the districts and at state level over the period of 7 years. While the decentralisation of planning and implementation of district based interventions is the starting point for DPEP, the Central Government has a responsibility to ensure the smooth implementation of the programme and render technical assistance to the states and districts as the needs emerge. As per the Constitution of India, education is a concurrent subject for the Central and State Governments. This implies a spirit of mutual support and partnership between Centre and states to further the goal of UEE. DPEP embodies this resolve and the guidelines/parameters of the programme have emerged after intensive dialogue with the States. Programme activities under DPEP will be concentrated at the district level, with supportive interventions from state and national levels. The bedrock of the programme is

to build national and local level capacities to plan, manage and implement the programme for primary education development.

- 4.1 The implications of the programme at the National level are several. As DPEP will cover several states and more than a hundred districts, and being a logical sequence to the extremely-aided basic education projects in Bihar, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and and Uttar Pradesh, there is reason to prove for regular system of monitoring, information sharing and dissemination of experiences at the national level. It is equally important to strengthen national capacity for research and design in primary education as also to establish an effective network between resource institutions at the national and state levels.

The main functions at the National level would be as follows:

- (i) Ensuring linkages between DPEP on the one hand and other areas of elementary education and adult literacy on the other.
- (ii) Technical assistance to the states in preparation of projects and their implementation.
- (iii) Appraisal of the projects received from States.
- (iv) Consideration of Annual Work Plans and sanction of Budgets. Given the process-intensive and innovation-demanding nature of the programme, the workplans have emerged as the main instrument of programme planning and implementation. If an analogy is to be drawn, annual workplans would be to DPEP project what the annual plan is to the Five Year Plan. This idea has been accepted by the agencies.
- (v) Monitoring and Supevision. There would be two formal supervisions in a year, the second coinciding with review of annual workplans and sanction of budget for the next financial year.
- (vi) Design and implementation of the national research and development programme.
- (vii) Securing necessary approvals within the Government of India.

(viii) Coordination with State Governments.

(ix) Coordination with multilateral and bilateral agencies.

#### **4.2 Structure of National Management Agency**

The guiding principles of organising the national Level Structure (NLS) are as follows:

- (i) The implementation to be in a mission mode, which entails NLS having adequate financial and administrative powers commensurate with its tasks.
  - (ii) The role of NLS would essentially comprise facilitation, capacity building, appraisal, coordination and over all direction of the programme. Till adequate capacity building in the states it would assist the states in planning and implementation.
  - (iii) NLS should have a lean organisation with minimal permanent staff and with most of its work, such as technical assistance to States, appraisal, research and evaluation, being done through contractual arrangements with institutions and individual consultants.
- 4.3 The NLS would comprise of the Mission's General Council and a DPEP Project Board. A Bureau for DPEP would be situated in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, with a policy cell and another, programme cell. To carry out the commitment at the national level, back up and support services would be provided through consultancies both institutional as well as individual. The consultancy and support services will be required in technical tasks such as planning, appraisal, supervision, monitoring, research and evaluation.

#### **4.4 The NLS would include the following:**

(i) A mission General Council (GC).

(ii) A Project Board (PB).

- (iii) DPEP bureau in the Ministry with two broad functions:
  - (a) PB servicing (b) programme.
- (iv) Consultancy and support services for which, for the time being, EdCIL would be the sole source. It would assist the DPEP Bureau in technical tasks such as planning, appraisal, supervision, monitoring, research and evaluation, resource support.

## GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council has been developed along the lines of the National Literacy Mission which is managing the Total Literacy Compaigns in the Country. The General Council for the Mission of DPEP will be headed by the Union Minister for Human Resource Development and will have, as mumber, the Ministers of Education of States which implement the programme, Education Secretaries of the participating States, Secretaries of the Central Government Departments of Education, Women and Child Devlopment, Health etc. Some eminent educationists, NGOs and public men will also be on the council. Joint Secretary of DPEP bureau will be the Secretary to the Council. The Council will meet annually. The Council will facilitate Centre-State coordination and promote debate on issues with policy implications for primary education development. The role of the Council will be to provide policy direction to the DPEP and to review the progress of the programme.

## Project Board

- 4.5 The General council will be assisted by a DPEP Project Board. This Board has been developed on the lines of the National Aids Control Programme. The DPEP Project Board will be an empowered body assigned with full financial and administrative powers to implement the programme. It will be headed by Union Education Secretary and will have representatives not below the rank of Joint Secretary of concerned departments, and Financial Adviser. The Joint Secretary of DPEP bureau will be the Member-Secretary of the PB. It will meet at leat once every quarter and more frequently if required.

4.6 The basic objective of setting up of the PB is to ensure that the necessary Governmental approvals are processed within the Ministry itself with the utmost expedition. Its composition is designed to facilitate this objective and is as follows:

Secretary (Edn)	<i>Chairman</i>
Joint Secretary & Financial Adviser	
Advisor (Education) Planning Commission	
Representative of Department of Expenditure	
Joint secretary (DPEP)	<i>Member-Secretary</i>

4.7 The broad functions of the PB are as follows:

- (i) Recommend to the Government policies in regard to DPEP.
- (ii) Consider annual workplans received from the states.
- (iii) Approval of norms for new programme components and activities which emerge over the course of implementation.
- (iv) Promote convergence of services.
- (v) Quarterly review of DPEP.

The PB will exercise all Financial and Administrative powers necessary for programme planning and implementation. It will exercise all powers vested in Department of Education. No separate reference would be required to Department of Expenditure as their representative is in the PB and thereby all financial powers would vest in the PB also.

It will also discharge the functions of the EFC (Expenditure Finance Committee of the Department of Expenditure) in regard to DPEP projects which would be formulated in the subsequent rounds of project formulation.

The PB will be an integral wing of the Ministry and its proceedings will issue under the authority of the Ministry.

## DPEP BUREAU

- 4.8 There would be a dedicated cell in the Ministry under the Joint Secretary. Much of the background work relating to policy, servicing of PB, release of finances to states, overall review of the programme would be done within the Bureau itself through its PB servicing division. Work relating to technical support to the states, appraisal, supervision, monitoring, research and evaluation, reimbursement and procurement would be organised through the programme division.
- 4.9 The PB Servicing Division would have two Deputy Secretaries/ Directors with appropriate support staff. This Division would be responsible for policy, coordination with funding agencies, Department of Economic Affairs, Planning Commission and different ministries and departments in Government of India such as Department of Rural Development, Department of Women and Child Development etc., so as to ensure convergence of different programmes having a bearing on the objectives and activities of DPEP. It will also be responsible for servicing and implementing the decisions of PB, release and reimbursement of funds, proper maintenance of accounts and compliance with procurement norms of the external funding agencies.
- 4.10 The Programme Division will organise carrying out its tasks of technical assistance in planning and pedagogy, appraisal of projects, supervision, monitoring, programme evaluation and research, and civil works through consultancies. In addition the programme division would be responsible for overall coordination with States on programme implementation and for the purpose the deputy secretaries in the programme implementation and for the purpose the deputy secretaries in the programme division would be assigned specific State.
- 4.11 The DPEP Bureau would be serviced by consultancy and support services. Tasks would be assigned by JS(DPEP) for responding to requests for professional services arising from programme planning and implementation. For the remaining 3 years of the

eighth plan, professional experts would be engaged on a sole source basis by the EdCIL to facilitate recruitment of professionals and engagement of institutional and individual consultants as per need. With the approval of the JS (DPEP), EdCIL would enter into sub-contracts with institutions and individuals for the implementation of various tasks to be discharged by it. The professionals would be contracted following norms and procedures set out in the contractual terms of reference to be entered into with EdCIL.

4.12 The programme Division of DPEP Bureau at the national level will be the nodal point for ensuring such backup support as may be required by the Programme. The four Deputy Secretaries in the programme Division will have specifically assigned States as well as functional areas. The Consultant (EdCIL) would be reporting to and be accountable to the Joint Secretary in DPEP Bureau but for day-to-day requirements of backup and other administrative support the respective deputy secretaries in the programme division would be constantly in touch with EdCIL and Consultants and functional areawise task forces. There will also be a larger Advisory Group to guide and review the activities of the Task Force. A resource support and institutional networking agenda will be built around this core.

4.13 The national level technical assistance will include the following:

- (i) Development of State capacities for plan formulation.
- (ii) MIS including school statistics, project indicators and building of a data base, would be developed, tested and installed in DPEP.
- (iii) Development of In-Service Teacher Training including prototype training designs and materials and competencies in multi-grade teaching and MLL.
- (iv) Development of prototype materials for Teaching, Reading and Mathematics for Classes I-III and evaluations of impact.

- (v) Development of prototype training materials in educational planning and management and the training and the training of teams in DPEP assisted states/districts.
  - (vi) A unit for programme research, studies and evaluation to organize research activities for better DPEP implementation and evaluation, as well as establish a network of research institutions for primary education.
  - (vii) Intervention strategies for tribal education.
  - (viii) Development of cost-effective designs for primary schools.
  - (ix) Provision for international exchanges and trainings for capacity building.
- 4.14 Though the states will be responsible for preparation of the district projects, a national resource team will assist state planning and management units/institutions to develop competencies in plan formulation through technical assistance. More specifically assistance in following planning areas can be given:
- (i) Analysis of education statistics;
  - (ii) District level planning through participatory planning,
  - (iii) Strategy formulation,
  - (iv) Intervention designs,
  - (v) Costing,
  - (vi) Implementation planning, and
  - (vii) Training and orientation of district/state core teams.

The national Management Structure would finance and monitor national level technical assistance and research activities through annual work plans and budgets for cooperating research organizations (NCERT, NIEPA, other national and state organization and commissioned research

and evaluation to meet the needs of DPEP. A media unit will organise audio-visual documentation and arrange publicity and media coverage for DPEP.

#### **4.15 Monitoring and Supervision Functions**

##### *Monitoring Unit*

The monitoring resource team at the national level will receive quarterly reports from the projects and analyse them. For the purpose monitoring resource team personnel and consultants will visit each State and a sample of districts quarterly, preparing reports on all elements of programme implementation. They will present to the Ministry a quarterly review of the programme. Reports will be made available to all funding agencies. A Project Management Information System will be developed to monitor the programme inputs, the expected outcomes and the financial disbursements. School Statistics to be collected in all DPEP districts (and subsequently the State as a whole) will be standardised and for the data capture formats will be developed. Data collectors (i.e., Teachers, Block and District officials) and the Data Entry Operators will be trained. Concurrent evaluation of the programme will also be taken up at the national level as part of the monitoring programme of the project.

##### *Supervision*

There will be biannual supervision missions to assess the progress of the programme. These supervision missions would be jointly conducted by the GOI and International funding agencies. Two of the four quarterly monitoring visits will coincide with these supervision missions. The first supervision mission would be in September-October and the second would be in February-March. The timing would facilitate to ensure and verify the budgetary (supplementary as well as general) provisions, and the progress being achieved on the ground. These missions will therefore comprise field visits on a sample basis. Document based analysis of all the districts and states could however be undertaken.

# 14

## MINIMUM LEVELS OF LEARNING AT PRIMARY STAGE

### Introduction

#### 1. Background

1.1 In line with the commitment of the country to provide elementary education to all children, educational facilities have got tremendously expanded during the post-independence period. This is particularly true of facilities at the primary education stage. The number of primary schools in the country has increased from 2.2 lakhs in 1950-51 to nearly 6.32 lakhs. In addition, there are at present nearly 3 lakh non-formal education centres providing primary level education to out-of-school children in the age-group 9 to 14. This expansion has definitely helped in making primary level education more easily accessible to a larger section of the population. In fact, according to the All-India Educational Survey conducted by the NCERT in 1986, nearly 95 per cent of the population are served by a primary school within a walking distance of 1 km. However, the large-scale expansion has resulted in the creation of educational facilities with widely varying quality in terms of institutional infrastructure, teaching-learning processes as well as the quality of students passing out of these institutions. The quality variations become more pronounced in certain states, between schools of rural and urban areas, between schools managed by government and non-government bodies, and so on. Recognizing the urgent need for rectifying this anomalous situation with respect to quality, the *National Policy on Education 1986* calls for paying

immediate attention to (i) improving the unattractive school environment, the unsatisfactory condition of buildings and inadequacy of instructional material; and (ii) laying down minimum levels of learning that all children completing different stages of education should achieve. Keeping this policy directive in view, the *Report of the Working Group on Early Childhood and Elementary Education Set up for Formulation of Eighth Five Year Plan* states:

"The targets need to be spelt out not only in terms of participation but also in terms of quality and outcomes. During the Eighth Plan, it should be our aim to bring about a substantial improvement in quality of education through improved infrastructure, improve teacher education, and substantial improvement in quality and quantity of learning materials. In terms of outcome it shall have to be ensured that minimum levels of learning are laid down with reference to the conclusion of primary and upper primary stages and an appropriate evaluation system created to ensure achievement at least of the prescribed levels of learning."

- 1.2 In fact, significant efforts towards specification of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) had already been made at the NCERT during 1978 in connection with the UNICEF-assisted projects on 'Primary Education Curriculum Renewal and 'Developmental Activities in Community Education and Participation'. As part of these projects, a 'Minimum Learning Continuum' was drawn indicating the learning outcomes expected to be achieved by all children completing Classes II, III, IV and V. The Primary Education Currioulum Renewal Project was evaluated in 1984 using a set of achievement test developed for all the primary classes based on the competencies specified in the Minimum Learning Continuum. Utilizing the empirical evidences collected through this evaluation study and following the National Policy on Education 1986, the NCERT prepared another document entitled, 'Minimum Levels of Learning at the Primary Stage'.
- 1.3 In the context of these exercises and the specifications made by the Eighth Plan Working Group, the Department of Education,

Ministry of Human Resource Development organized a seminar in December 1989 on the theme, 'Basic Learning Needs and Levels of Attainment'. Various issues related to basic learning needs of the children at the primary stage, the need of specifying minimum levels of learning and creation of appropriate mechanisms for assessment of learner attainment were discussed during the seminar. On the issue of laying down minimum levels of learning the seminar recommended for initiating concrete efforts at the national level.

## **2. Committee on MLL: Composition and Terms of Reference**

Against this background, the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India set up a committee vide order No. 74/3/89-Desk(TE) dated 5 January 1990.

### **2.1 *Terms of Reference***

The terms of reference of the committee were as under:

1. Draw up minimum level of learning for Classes III and V.
2. Recommend a procedure for comprehensive learner evaluation and assessment.
3. Look into the non-cognitive areas of learning and suggest concrete ways in which teaching in these areas can be improved.

The committee was further informed that the terms of reference related to both formal and non-formal system of education.

## **3. Procedures Followed by the Committee**

3.1 The committee met five times for durations of one to five days between January and August 1990. It invited some more specialists to attend its first meeting and held a wide range of discussions. The committee decided to follow the following broad parameters for work within the framework provided by the terms of reference:

1. The committee will take an intergrated view of primary level education being provided in the country through formal as well as non-formal streams. Accordingly, the minimum levels

of learning to specified by the committee will be applicable to primary level education, both in the formal and the non-formal streams.

2. The committee recognized that the curriculum prescribed for primary level education consists of a number of subject areas. it was decided that the committee will draw minimum levels of learning only in respect of three subjects, namely, language (mother tongue), mathematics and environmental studies.
  3. Even though the terms of reference required the specification of Minimum Levels with respect to Class III and V only, the committee decided to carry out the exercise with respect to all the five classes at the primary stage. This was considered necessary in order to ensure proper progression of competencies within each class as well as across the five classes.
  4. The committee recognized that consideration of non-cognitive aspects of learning is a wide area and demands a separate exercise. Therefore, it was decided that the present exercise may not deal with the psychomotor domain and even in the effective domain the committee would only indicate the direction in which educational programmes be reoriented for imbibing a few basic characteristics relevant to personal and social growth of the individual as well as national development.
- 3.2 Following these basic clarifications regarding the terms of reference and the work of the committee, specific tasks were taken up by the members and others associated with the work of the committee. The draft material developed through this process was presented and discussed in the subsequent meetings of the committee. The revised versions were provisionally adopted at the fourth meeting of the committee held in June 1990. It was also decided to hold a wide range of consultations with practising teachers from the formal as well as the non-formal streams before finalizing the MLLs, the scheme of evaluation and suggestions for strengthening instructional programmes in the non-cognitive areas of learning.

- 3.3 Accordingly, consultative meetings of teachers were held in seven States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu with the help of the concerned State Councils of Educational Research and Training and some voluntary agencies involved in non-formal education programmes in these States. Each meeting was of five-day duration and had 30 to 35 participants. In all, 227 primary school teachers and NFE instructors were consulted through this process. The suggestions given by the participants of the meetings were collated and placed before the committee in its fifth and final meeting in August 1990. In the light of the reaction of the teachers/instructors, the earlier drafts were revised and rewritten. The committee also drew up a plan of action for implementing the recommendations of the committee.

### **Minimum Levels of Learning: Some Important Features**

#### **I. Introduction**

- 1.1 The need to lay down Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) emerges from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, all children must be given access to education of a comparable standard. The major focus of the policy formulation behind the MLL exercise is upon equity and reduction of existing disparities. The effort is to combine quality concerns for equity keeping in view the developmental needs of children from the disadvantaged and deprived section of the society, the dropouts, working children, and girls, who constitute the majority of school-going age population in this country, and to whom, in all likelihood, at least for some time to come, primary education will be the only opportunity for structured learning. This basic concern underscores the approach adopted by the committee in defining the minimum levels of learning.
- 1.2 Minimum levels of learning can, perhaps, be specified in a variety of ways. For instance, MLLs can be stated as expected learning outcomes defined as observable terminal behaviours. One may also go for taxonomic analysis of learning objectives such as knowledge,

comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and so on and accordingly indicate the expected learning outcomes. One can also state the MLLs in terms of learning competencies expected to be mastered by every child by the end of a particular class or stage of education. These different approaches for stating the MLLs are not mutually exclusive. Of the various alternatives available, the committee has chosen to state the MLLs in terms of terminal competencies. Each competency can be further delineated in terms of subcompetencies while specifying the content inputs or while designing specific measures of learning.

- 1.3 It may be noted that the set of MLLs would actually represent the rational criteria adopted for judging the adequacy of the curricular input provided and the learning outcomes to be expected. There can be no finality with respect to any set of MLLs. This applies to the set of MLLs developed by the committee also. Two basic considerations kept in view while formulating the MLL are: (i) the cognitive capabilities of the children at different classes or grades corresponding to different stage of development; and (ii) the empirical reality in terms of the enabling environmental conditions that characterize the primary education programmes.
- 1.4 No attempt has been made by the committee to provide a technical analysis of the meaning of Minimum Levels of Learning. The present section discusses some of the important operation features which have guided the committee in formulating the MLLs.

## **2. Specification of MLL: A Quality Issue**

The emphasis on defining precisely what children should have learnt by the end of every stage of education stems principally from three concerns.

- 2.1 Firstly, laying down of well-defined levels of learning is expected to introduce a sense of direction and a greater element of accountability in the system. It is often pointed out that neither teachers and pupils, and as a consequence, nor parents and educational planners seem to know where they are and where they

ought to be. Without a clearly defined set of criteria for measuring student progress, it is not surprising that the teacher lose sight of their goals, and it is far-fetched to presume that such measures as regular attendance and the completion of the syllabus in time can effectively substitute measures of actual attainment of learning. As a natural consequence, the pupils also are likely to lose a sense of purpose and motivation in their studies, and many parents may get to doubt the worthwhileness of schooling rather than employing the children more usefully elsewhere. Stating precisely what the objectives are and clearly defining. The minimum levels of learning that all children must achieve at a given stage of education, is thus seen as one of the important prerequisites for infusing a sense of direction to the system and thereby paving the way for improving its accountability.

- 2.2 Secondly, it is expected that MLL will provide an effective tool for programme formulation for school improvement. The quality of a school or educational system should, in the real sense, be defined in terms of the performance capabilities of its students and graduates. Yet, in practice, since inputs into the teaching process are generally easier to measure than education's multifaceted outputs, quality is often depicted in terms of the former than the latter. However, at the present juncture, when the focus of school improvement programmes tend to be on factors that are likely to multiply costs per capita, it is necessary to set up measures for judging the quality of schools by what students are actually learning. What is it that makes a good school? Is it better building, more equipment or better qualified teacher? To what extent can we increase inputs to increase output? In order to find proper answers to these questions and provide inputs selectively, we have to first define our measure of output in the form of expected standard of achievement by practically all children.
- 2.3 Thirdly, and fundamental to the issue, there is the widely held perception that in a vast majority of government and municipal schools children can barely read their own textbooks even after spending as many as five years in school. Considering that, to a

large number of them, opportunity for education is not likely to be available beyond the primary stage and what they learn here must sustain them throughout their lives, it becomes imperative that the educational system makes sure that these precious school years of the children are not wasted. That all children, irrespective of the conditions they come from and the condition of the schools they attend, reach a minimum level of learning before they finish primary education that would eventually enable them to understand their world and prepared them to function in it as permanently literate, socially useful and contributing adults.

### **3. Specification of MLL: A Curriculum Issue.**

- 3.1 Every curriculum, as it attempts to modify the cognitive as well as noncognitive domains of development of the learner, lays down specific educational objectives and the corresponding learning outcomes expected on the part of the learners. Usually, these are defined with reference to targets of educational achievement under ideal conditions of learning, enabling the learnings to fully realize their inherent potential and engage in socially useful life. However, the criticism levelled against the existing set of curricular prescriptions and the corresponding learning outcomes is that they are only designed to prepare students for secondary and university education. Consequently, there is an overload of content, of facts and information that would have very little relevance to the life or needs of a majority of students.
- 3.2 Also, it is often pointed out that the outcomes of learning expected do not seem to be based on the maturity level of the learner especially during the initial years of elementary education. This ambitiousness in the primary level syllabus is now increasingly recognized as counter-productive to excellence in learning and dangerous to the concerns of equity. The syllabus load often compels the teacher to ignore altogether certain basic principles of the teaching-learning process. The need to complete the syllabus seems to take precedence over the need to progress according to the pace of learning of the whole class and teachers find themselves forced to ignore the strugglers, forego attempts at remedial teaching or considerations for experimentation, exploration, observation or

activity-based learning. The conventional textbook and lecture method of teaching, being the quickest way to complete the syllabus, becomes the best option available, forcing upon the students a joyless rote memorization, an overemphasis upon textbooks and in many cases, a reliance on help from outside the school. The disadvantage this builds into the system for the already deprived needs no special elaboration—for those who have no support for learning at home or outside the school, no proper textbooks and learning aids, and who consequently have a complete dependence on schools for mastering their syllabus, it leaves little scope but for repetitions or dropping out. Even many of those who manage to complete, despite these handicaps, attain at best an incomplete mastery of the basic skills.

**3.3** Laying down minimum levels of learning should help to resolve some of these problems by identifying the irrelevant and excessive learning load in the existing curriculum. The MLL exercise should, therefore, be viewed as part of a larger curriculum reform endeavour attempting to move towards greater relevance and functionality in primary education. The implications of this exercise are:

- lightening the curriculum of its textual load and also the burden of memorizing unnecessary and irrelevant facts;
- leaving room for the teacher to relate textbook information and objective reality into a meaningful process of understanding and application;
- ensuring the acquisition of basic competencies and skills to such a level where they are sustainable, and would not easily allow for relapse into illiteracy;
- permitting mastery learning not only by the brighter students in the class but also by almost all children, including the first generation learners.

#### **4. Some Basic Features of MLL**

Specification of MLLs should meet the purpose of increasing learning attainments and serve as performance goals for the teacher and

output indicators for the system. For this, the MLL must have, apart from relevance and functionality, the attributes of achievability, understandability and evaluability.

#### 4.1 Achievability

A basic characteristic that MLLs must satisfy is that they should correspond to learning objectives that are achievable by all learners. This is so because of certain specific reasons:

- (i) *To serve as performance objectives and goals:* It is generally observed that curriculum objectives are so remote from the life situation of the child and the actual levels of achievement in the class that very few teachers feel the assurance that they can help their pupils achieve the objectives. They tend, therefore, to implicitly formulate their own objectives, either going through the motions of textbook lessons or just rote memorization. It is felt that the teacher would teach to the prescribed curriculum objectives and accept them as goals only if he feels confident that he can actually achieve them. Such a situation must be ensured in our educational institutions if the teachers have to use learning objective as performance goals and output measures.
- (ii) *To ensure learning up to mastery level by child in the class:* The present objectives, as achievement tests reveal, are mastered by very few children in a class. The majority learns them inadequately, or incompletely, and tend to easily forget them. The endeavour should, therefore, be to set MLLs closer to the realistic levels of attainability so that the class as a whole works towards mastery of these MLLs. In operational terms, 80 per cent or more of the children mastering at least 80 per cent of the prescribed learning levels should be the performance target for the teacher henceforth.
- (iii) In a country in which achievement levels vary widely with regions, districts, school conditions, socio-economic profile and other diverse factors, setting realistic and achievable minimum levels necessarily demands a great deal of flexibility in

implementation. For example, what is easily achievable as mastery level learning in municipal schools in Bombay at present may not be immediately feasible for panchayat schools in Jaisalmer district in Rajasthan. It is, therefore, expected that each region, preferably district, will examine the MLLs in relation to its own situation, and set intermediate targets which would permit, within a reasonable expectation of improvement in school conditions and a specified time frame, mastery level attainment by almost all children in their schools. It is necessary that this exercise be preceded by a careful criterion-referenced assessment of the existing levels of achievement. These intermediate stages may be set as time-bound target to convey a sense of urgency and serve as a reference against which indices of implementation and accomplishment can be compared. The expectation will be that by improving inputs into the system, the levels of achievement in each school or region are gradually raised till they reach the MLLs. Different regions, depending on their present levels of achievement will take varying periods of time to reach the standards indicated by the MLLs. The endeavour will be to direct greater resources where levels of learning are lower and to consciously accelerate the pace of development in the needy regions, thereby reducing disparities and equalizing standards over the entire country in the shortest possible time.

#### 4.2 *Communicability*

It is not enough that MLLs are realistic and achievable. It is equally important to set them in a language and form that are easily understandable to all the teachers, many of whom located in remote rural areas work in isolation without any outside help or guidance. Apart from primary school teachers, the MLLs should also be understandable to the NFE instructor, the parent, and the community. Thus, in order to function as achievement targets, the MLLs must be spelt out simple enough terms so as to be understandable to all those concerned with the academic growth of the children. Accordingly, an attempt has been made to prepare the Report of the Committee in a such a way that it places in the hands of

the primary school teacher and the NFE instructor a document that will serve as a statement of expected competencies guiding their classroom teaching and evaluation procedures. This should also be equally useful to curriculum developers, textbook writers and educational administrators.

#### 4.3 *Evaluability*

The statement of MLLs should be such that they serve as an effective blue print for continuous and comprehensive evaluation of learners and thereby streamline the processes involved presently, no systematic learner evaluation procedures are adopted at the elementary stage in many of the schools. Most states follow a no-detention or automatic promotion policy, according to which children are not to be detained in the same class to repeat the course, since this has been identified as a main reason for dropping out without completing even the primary stage of education. The no-detention policy presumes an intrinsic ability of all children to learn provided they are taught well enough, and placed the onus upon the teacher and the school to create conditions whereby learning can effectively take place. It is, however, observed that many teachers interpret 'no detention' as 'no testing' and have altogether given up doing pupil evaluation, with the result that, very often, no one is fully aware of the learning status of the children till they reach the terminal class of the elementary stage. Taking stock of this situation, the Working Group for the Eighth Five Year Plan (1989) has recommended the introduction of a comprehensive evaluation system:

Students should have a well-defined goal of acquiring a mastery level, particularly in subjects which serve as the basic tools of learning. Parents seem to feel dissatisfied with the levels of learning being achieved in schools and would feel happier with a testing system introduced. Teachers too need to know more clearly about the expected outcomes in the courses they teach. Educational administrators would have in the system of tests of learners, the instrumentality to appraise the performance of institutions and teachers.

For MLLs to provide this well-defined goal of acquiring a mastery level it is necessary that they must give a clear-cut specification of expected

learning outcomes, which would permit the construction of criterion-referenced tests by the teachers. Results of such tests based on the MLLs should be such that the teacher can identify which specific learning outcomes or competencies have not been mastered by the learner, help the learner to relearn the clusters of competencies representing specific unit, as well as prepare corrective for remedial instruction quite precisely. Thus MLLs stated in easily evaluable terms should help the learners achieve mastery levels as they move from one unit to the next. The attempt has thus been to set the MLLs in such a way as to make assessment of learner attainment easy for the teacher, whether it is done through written oral or other types of tests.

#### **4.4 Learning Continuum**

The endeavour has been to set MLLs in as simple and comprehensible manner as possible, specifying the competencies to be mastered under each learning unit from Class I through class V. Learning has been seen as a 'continuum', in which the units are sequenced hierarchically so that the clusters of competencies in one unit build as directly as possible on the competencies in the preceding unit. It is firmly believed that if the children progress systematically through this continuum, mastering the concerned sets of competencies in each unit before they move on to the next, learning each subsequent unit will be more enjoyable and meaningful, and the achievement of minimum levels of learning will be facilitated.

### **5. Comparable Learning in FEE**

- 5.1 Even though the MLLs are being specified in terms of five classwise stages, the underlying concept to 'learning continuum' makes this division only indicative and not rigid. In practice, the pace of learning of the child will decide how long it should take to reach the prescribed MLL; and age, earlier learning experience, learning time within and outside school are some of the factors that will decide the pace.
- 5.2 It is conceivable, therefore, to prescribe the same levels of learning for the NFE system, or any other alternative system for primary education. Indeed, the exercise of laying down a level of learning

that has regard not to the syllabus and contents of primary schools but specify expected learning outcomes in the form of functionally relevant skills and competencies should help in answering in a convincing manner the questions regarding comparability of learning standards between formal primary schools and alternative models. The question no longer remains one of NFE conforming or not to the primary school norms, but becomes one of the viability of different models and methodologies to attain prescribed levels of learning. From questioning the rationale of the NFE system, the concern shifts to issues regarding the duration, quality and teaching processes of the various models and hence, logically to the inputs required to ensure that the prescribed levels of learning are effectively reached by all learners.

## **6. Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Areas of Learning**

According to the terms of reference of the committee, the present exercise of delineating MLLs is confined to the curricular areas of

- Language
- Mathematics
- Environmental Studies (including Social Studies and Science).

While these are very crucial subjects for primary education, other subjects such as Physical Education, Work Experience and Music & Art Education should not be excluded from the total curriculum plan. Similarly, the non-cognitive aspects of the curriculum are as important, if not more, as cognitive areas. Not only that the non-cognitive learning outcomes cut across different subjects of the curriculum mentioned above, but they also call for a variety of co-curricular activities organized within and outside the school. In view of the limited scope of this committee's work and limitations of time, the committee has just briefly mentioned in this report certain key personal and social qualities that lead to character building. In brief, further work will be needed to develop specifications of MLL with respect to those subjects that have not been dealt with in the report of this committee.

## Minimum Levels of Learning in Language

At the primary level, language occupies a pivotal place in the curriculum. The basic skills acquired through language learning facilitate learning of concepts in other areas. Moreover, in the shaping of the personality of the child and in all his/her effective transactions in the day-to-day life situations, the nine basic language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing, comprehension of ideas (through listening and reading), functional grammar, self-learning, language use, and vocabulary control play significant roles.

### Objectives of Language Learning

At the primary stage, the main objectives of language learning are to:

- be able to listen with understanding;
- be able to speak effectively in both informal and formal transactions;
- be able to read with comprehension and enjoy reading various kinds of instructional materials;
- be able to write neatly, with logical sequence and creativity;
- be able to comprehend ideas through listening and reading;
- be able to use grammar functionally in various contexts;

### Gradation of Competencies for Different Classes

The minimum levels of learning have been stated in terms of competencies that every child should be able to develop in the school or in the NFE centre. (The middle number in the numbering system used shows the year or the class).

The competencies have been listed year-wise. However, the competencies listed under each class are the starting points for building these competencies. These should be carried throughout till the end of primary schooling. (See, for example, competencies 4.1.1 to 4.5.1)

### **Inter-linkages between Competencies**

The first four competencies (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) relate to the four language skills that are well known. These competencies are basic and have to be established in any effective language learning context.

Although these competencies have been listed separately for convenience of specification of levels, the competencies are naturally interlinked.

This inter-linkage between four basic competencies is reflected in Competency 5 which attempts to specify levels of comprehension of ideas in language through listening and reading. It should be noted that just as listening and reading are interlinked so are reading and writing, and listening and speaking. In the same way all the competencies listed here have linkages with each other.

For effective transactions of these competencies the teacher will have to provide interesting and dynamic linkages between the various competencies.

### **Teaching-Learning Strategies**

A variety of interesting activities in the form of narration of events, peer group discussions, story-telling, drama, dialogue, question-answer, quiz competition, riddles, word-play, debates during school functions, and songs are to be organized for making language learning a joyful activity. Selflearning skills and functional use of language are also to be developed by encouraging the study of interesting children's books, picture dictionary and peer group activities.

### **Pupil Evaluation**

The MLLs are designed to assist the teacher (or NFE Instructor) to evaluate whether the learner is able to develop these competencies through the teaching-learning strategies. In pupil evaluation the major emphasis should be on creating informal social situations in the class. Functionality and creative use of language in day-to-day life situations should be the other points in consideration. Besides textbooks, other materials like picture cards, word cards, participation in social situations may also be utilized for assessing pupil's level of learning competencies in language.

**Statement of MLLs in Language**

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Class I</b>	<b>Class II</b>	<b>Class III</b>	<b>Class IV</b>	<b>Class V</b>
<b>1.</b> <b>Listening</b>	<p>1.1.1. Listen with understanding to simple, familiar and popular rhymes, poems and tales</p> <p>1.1.2 Understand conversation and dialogues in familiar situations</p> <p>1.1.3. Understand oral requests and simple instructions in familiar situations</p> <p>2.1.1 Repeat simple sentences correctly</p> <p>2.1.2 Recite simple rhymes, poems and songs in a group with gestures and actions</p> <p>2.1.3 Answer simple questions requiring yes/no answers</p> <p>2.1.4 Ask simple questions</p>	<p>1.2.1 Listen with understanding to simple but unfamiliar poems, songs and stories</p> <p>1.2.2 Understand conversation and dialogue in familiar situations</p> <p>1.2.3 Understand oral requests, instructions, commands and questions in familiar</p> <p>2.2.1 Pronounce all sounds of the language</p> <p>2.2.2. Recite poems and songs in a group and individually and action</p> <p>2.2.3 Answer simple questions requiring full answers</p> <p>2.2.4 Seek information about familiar things</p>	<p>1.3.1 Listen with Understanding to narrations, descriptions word-play and riddles</p> <p>1.3.2 Understand conversation and dialogues in unfamiliar situations</p> <p>1.3.3 Understand oral instructions for playing games, carrying out simple activities</p> <p>2.3.1. Speak with correct pronunciation</p> <p>2.3.2 Narrate simple known stories with proper modulation</p> <p>2.3.3 Describe familiar things and objects and objects</p> <p>2.3.4 Ask more complex questions</p>	<p>1.4.1 Listen with understanding to simple speeches in familiar situations</p> <p>1.4.2 Understand conversation and dialogues in unfamiliar situations</p> <p>1.4.3 Understand series of oral instructions for performing an activity</p> <p>2.4.1. Speak without stopping unnaturally</p> <p>2.4.2 Recite with proper delivery</p> <p>2.4.3. Describe unfamiliar things</p> <p>2.4.4 Take part in simple classroom discussion</p>	<p>1.5.1 Listen with understanding to recitations, plays and debates (during a school function or competition)</p> <p>1.5.2 Understand conversation dialogues and discussion in unfamiliar situations</p> <p>1.5.3 Understand instructions for performing a group activity</p> <p>2.5.1 Speak fluently and naturally</p> <p>2.5.2 Speak on simple known themes</p> <p>2.5.3 Describe situations and events</p> <p>2.5.4. Take part in plays, debates and make formal announcements</p>
<b>2.</b> <b>Speaking</b>					

Competencies	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
3. Reading	3.1.1 Recognize common letters of alphabets in combinations and singly  3.1.2. Read large print and handwriting on black boards, flash card, etc.	3.2.1 Recognize infrequent letters and conjunct letters  3.2.2. Read large and small prints ,	3.3.1 Read road signs, hoarding and simple notices (as on a notice board)	3.4.1 Read comic-strips and posters  3.4.2. Read handwriting of other children	3.5.1 read simple figures, charts, maps  3.5.2. Read print and handwriting freely
4. Writing	3.1.3. Read aloud simple known words (of generally not more than three syllables)  4.1.1. Copy consonants, vowels, matras and conjunct letters  4.1.2. Write (from dictation) consonants, vowels, matras and conjunct letters  4.1.3. Write sample familiar words and simple sentences	3.2.3. Read aloud rhymes, poems, songs and simple stories  4.2.1. Copy words and sentences  4.2.2. Take simple dictioon of known words  4.2.3 Write simple guided descriptive sentences	3.3.3. Read simple story books and other children's books  4.3.1. Take distinctions of correct shape, sequence, spacing of letters and words  4.3.2 Take dictation. with unknown words	3.4.3. Read children's magazines  4.4.1. Write neatly and legibly  4.4.2. Take dictation with simple punctuation marks	3.5.3. Read newspapers and other printed matter  4.5.1 Write with correct format, spacing, etc.  4.5.2 Take dictation with all punctuation marks  4.5.3 Write short free composition informal letters and dialogues
5. Comprehension of ideas (through listening and reading)	5.1.1 Recall simple information given in a short spoken text	5.2.1. Recall sequence of events in a short spoken or written text	5.3.1. Locate main ideas in a spoken or written text	5.4.1. Recognize simple cause and effect relationship between ideas and events in a spoken or written text  5.5.1. Make inferences from the information given in a spoken or written text	

Competencies	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
6.	<p>5.1.2 After listening be able to answer questions of 'who', 'when' and 'where'</p> <p>6.1.1. Become aware of similarities between words on the basis of word ending</p>	<p>5.2.2. After listening be able to answer questions of 'what' and 'how'</p> <p>6.2.1 Become aware of similarities between words on the basis of word beginning.</p>	<p>5.3.2. After listening or reading a text, be able to answer questions of 'why'</p> <p>6.3.1. Become aware of meaning relationship between words roots (prefixes, suffixes) and word stems)</p>	<p>5.4.2. After listening or reading a text, be able to answer questions using 'because', 'since', 'then'</p> <p>6.4.1. Understand simple functional rules of sentence construction</p>	<p>5.5.2. After listening to or reading a text, be able to answer and question using 'if... then'</p> <p>6.5.1. Understand simple functional rules of parts of speech</p>
7.	7.1.1. Be able to use simple picture glossary where available	7.2.1 Be able to use simple picture encyclopaedia where available	7.3.1 Be able to use children's illustrated dictionary where available	7.4.1. Be able to use junior dictionary where available	7.5.1 Be able to use junior encyclopedia where available
8.	8.1.1. understand and use simple polite formulas	8.2.1. Speak politely and be attentive while listening	8.3.1. Take turn while speaking in group	8.4.1. Learn about difference between formal and informal language	8.5.1. Use appropriate language in formal and informal situations
9.	9.1.1. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 2000 words	9.2.1 Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 3000 words	9.3.1. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 4000 words	9.4.1. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 5000 words	9.5.1. Be able to acquire reading comprehension vocabulary of approx. 5000 words

## **Minimum Levels of Learning in Mathematics**

### **Introduction**

#### *Objectives of Primary Mathematics*

One of the major objectives of teaching primary mathematics is to enable children to solve speedily and accurately the numerical and spatial problems which they encounter at home, in the school and in the community. Primary mathematics should help children develop understanding of key mathematical concepts at each level through appropriate experiences with things from the physical world and the immediate environment. It should help children develop an understanding from the concrete to the abstract, from the specific to the general. The mathematics curriculum at the primary stage should, therefore, be directed to achieve the following objectives:

#### **Ability to**

- perform computations, with speed and accuracy
- translate verbal statements (a) in mathematical form using appropriate symbols, and (b) diagrammatically
- make reasonably good approximations and estimate measurements
- apply mathematical concepts and skills to solve simple problems of day-to-day life
- think logically
- recognize order and pattern.

#### *Not to Minimum Learning Competencies*

1. The key mathematical concepts for each class are not listed in order of instructional sequence but have been classified under the following five areas of mathematical competencies:
  - (i) Understanding Whole Numbers and Numerals.

- (ii) Ability to Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide Whole Numbers.
  - (iii) Ability to use and solve simple problems of daily life relating to Units of Money, Length, Weight, Capacity, Area and Time.
  - (iv) Ability to use Fractions, Decimals and Percentage.
  - (v) Understanding of Geometrical Shapes and Spatial Relationships.
2. There is a separate section entitled *Readiness for Primary Mathematics* which precedes the above five areas. These are not to be viewed as experiences to be given only at the beginning of Class I, but rather spread over Class I and Class II as developing readiness for the concepts and problem-solving which are to follow in Classes III-V.
3. The key mathematical competencies have been listed primarily to include for the most part concepts and application of skills which will help all children acquire certain minimum levels of functional mathematics. Mastery of these competencies will help children at present and in their later life to apply mathematical concepts and skills to solve problems relating to daily life. Therefore, these key mathematical competencies have included mental mathematical skills, estimation skills and the understanding of shapes and spatial relationships.
4. Concrete objects and mathematical equipment need to be used throughout the primary stage in mathematics, especially wherever new key concepts have to be gained. Though not always stated in conjunction with each skill/concept in the minimum learning competencies, it is imperative that this approach should be consistently followed. It has been stated in Class I as indicative and to highlight the significance of the experiential approach in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Such experiential learning will also enable children to find pleasure and excitement in the study of mathematics.
5. It should be noted that while it has not been stated, children need

to revise the earlier stage of mathematical concepts before proceeding further. This revision has been indicated with each concept.

6. In a few cases, the same mathematical competency has been repeated in two classes. This implies that while instruction and practice in the competency should be given in both classes, mastery should only be expected in the higher class.

*Readiness for Primary mathematics*

1. Arrange objects in order according to size, length, thickness, weight and volume and use vocabulary describing the relationship, e.g. 'bigger than', 'smaller than', 'the same as', 'heavier', 'heaviest', etc.
2. Classify groups of objects according to various properties, e.g. size, shape, length, etc.
3. Compare positions of things and persons in terms of the distance from a given point of reference and use vocabulary describing the relationships, e.g. 'near', 'far', 'nearest', etc.
4. Perceive and reproduce simple patterns relating to shape, colour, position and quantity.

**Statement of M.I.L.s in Mathematics**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Class I</b>	<b>Class II</b>	<b>Class III</b>	<b>Class IV</b>	<b>Class V</b>
1. Understanding whole Numbers and Numerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1 Counts from 1-20 using objects and pictures</li> <li>• 1.2 Recognizes numerals and matches numbers to numerals from 1-100</li> <li>• 1.3 Identifies zero as the number representing nothing or the absence of objects in a collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.2.1 Demonstrates understanding of place value of 2 digit numbers by expanding numbers between 10-99 into 10's and ones, and by expressing the expanded form as a 2-digit number</li> <li>• 1.2.2 States the place value of the digits within a 2-digit numeral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.3.1 Recognizes and writes numerals from 100-1,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.4.1. Recognizes and writes numerals from 1,000-10,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5.1. Recognizes and writes numerals from 10,000-1,00,000 (One crore)</li> </ul>

\*Competencies marked with an (\*) indicate that these competencies should also be evaluated using concrete objects, pictures or relevant mathematical apparatus.

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
	1.1.4 Demonstrates understanding of place value by expanding numbers 10-20 into tens and ones, and by expressing the expanded form as a two digit number	1.2.4 Finds the number of objects in a given set by counting in 2's, 5's, or 10's (set of objects not exceeding 100)	1.3.4 States the place value of the digits within a 3-digit numeral	1.4.4 Arranges numbers from 1,000-10,000 in ascending and descending order	1.5.4 Arranges numbers from 10,000-1,00,000 in ascending and descending order
	1.1.5 States the place value of the digits in the numbers 10-20		1.3.5 Arranges numbers from 100-1,000 in ascending and descending order	1.4.5 Identifies the numeral/numerals before, after or between any numeral/numerals between 1,000-10,000	1.5.5 Identifies the numeral/numerals before, after or between any numeral/numerals between 10,000-1,00,000
	1.1.6 Arranges numbers from 1-100 descending order		1.3.6 Identifies the numeral/numerals before, after or between any numeral/numerals between 100-1,000	1.4.6 Compares numbers from 1,000-10,000 using the signs $>$ , $<$ , $=$	1.5.6 Compares numbers from 10,000-9,99,999 using the signs $>$ , $<$ , $=$
	1.1.7 Identifies the numeral/numerals before, after or between and numeral/numerals between 1-100		1.3.7 Compares numbers from 100-1,000 using the signs $>$ , $<$ , $=$	1.4.7 Demonstrates understanding of multiples and factors of a number	1.5.7 Calculates Highest Common Factor (HCF) of 2 numbers not exceeding 100
	1.1.8 Compares numbers from 1-100 using the words 'more than', 'less than', 'the same as', 'greatest', 'least'		1.3.8 Demonstrates understanding of even and odd numbers	1.4.8 Demonstrates understanding of prime numbers up to 50	1.5.8 Calculates Lowest Common Multiple (LCM) of 2 or 3 numbers each of which do not exceed 10

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
2. Ability to Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide Whole Numbers	<p>1.1.9. Writes the numerals from 1-100</p> <p>*2.1.1. Adds numbers 0-18 with sum not exceeding 18</p> <p>2.1.2. Adds two numbers mentally with sum not exceeding 9</p> <p>*2.1.3. Subtracts numbers from 0-18 to separate smaller number from a larger number and to find the difference between two numbers</p> <p>2.1.4. Subtracts mentally one single digit number from another single digit number</p>	<p>1.2.9. Demonstrates understanding of ordinal numbers 11-100</p> <p>2.2.1. Adds two or three 2-digit numbers without carrying and with carrying and sum not exceeding 99</p> <p>2.2.2. Subtracts 2-digit numbers without borrowing and with borrowing</p> <p>2.2.3. Solves one step of daily life problems involving skills 2.2.1 and 2.2.2</p> <p>2.2.4. Adds two numbers mentally between 0-18 with the sum not exceeding 18</p>	<p>2.3.1. Adds two or three 4-digit numbers with carrying and exceeding 9,999</p> <p>2.3.2. Subtracts 3-digit numbers with borrowing</p> <p>2.3.3. Solves 1-2 steps of daily life problems involving skill 2.3.1. and 2.3.2</p>	<p>2.4.1. Adds two or three 4-digit numbers with carrying and exceeding 9,999</p> <p>2.4.2. Subtracts 4-digit numbers with borrowing</p> <p>2.4.3. Solves 1-2 steps of daily life problems involving skills 2.4.1-2.4.2</p>	<p>2.5.1. Adds two to four 5 and 6-digit numbers with sum not exceeding 9,99,999</p> <p>2.5.2. Subtracts 5 and 6-digit numbers</p> <p>2.5.3. Multiplies a number by a number up to 3 digits with product not exceeding 9,99,999</p> <p>2.4.4. Adds and subtracts mentally two numbers that are whole 100's, where no number in the operation exceeds 1,000</p> <p>2.4.4. Adds and subtracts mentally two numbers that are whole 1000's, where no number in the operation exceeds 10,000</p>

Area	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
2.1.5. Interprets and writes the symbols +, -, and =	2.2.5. Subtracts numbers mentally (Both numbers not exceeding 18)	2.3.5. Solves one step of daily life problems mentally involving addition and subtraction with no number exceeding 50 and no carrying/borrowing	2.4.5. Understands various terms of multiplication such as multiple, multiplier and product	2.5.5. Solves 1-2 steps of daily life problems involving any 2 of the 4 basic operation of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using not more than 6-digit numbers at any stage in the operations and using one or more of skills 2.5.1-2.5.4	2.5.6. Solves 1-2 steps or daily life problems mentally involving and 2 of the 4 basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with sum, product and dividend not exceeding 100 and factors not exceeding 10 where no carrying, borrowing or remainder involved
2.1.6. Solves daily life problems involving addition and subtraction skills as in 2.1.1	2.2.6 Solves one step of daily life problems mentally involving addition and subtraction skills as in 2.2.4 and 2.2.5	2.3.6. Adds and subtracts mentally two numbers that are multiples of 10 or 100, between 10-1,100 where one of the numbers is a 2-digit number and where no carrying or borrowing is involved. e.g. $220 + 40, 850 - 20$	2.4.6. Multiplies 2 and 3-digit numbers by a 2-digit number with product not exceeding 9,999		

<i>Appendix</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
2.1.7. Solves daily life problems mentally involving addition and subtraction skills as in 2.1.2 and 2.1.4	2.2.7. Demonstrates understanding of concept of multiplication as repeated addition with 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 as factors	2.3.7. Demonstrates understanding of concept of multiplication as repeated addition with 6, 7, 8 and 9 as factors	2.4.7. Understands various terms of division such as divisor, dividend, quotient and remainder	2.5.7. Uses unitary method to solve simple daily life problems	
	2.2.8. Interprets and writes the symbol ( $\times$ ) for multiplication	2.3.8. Knows mentally and in writing multiplication tables with 2-10 as factors	2.4.8. Divides a number up to 3 digits by a number not exceeding 10 with borrowing and with remainder	2.5.8. Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of average and is able to compute it	
	2.2.9. Knows mentally and in writing multiplication tables of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10	2.3.9. Multiplies 2 and 3-digit numbers with single digit with carrying and product not exceeding 999	2.4.9. Solves 1-2 steps of daily life problems involving multiplication and division using skills 2.4.6, 2.4.8	2.5.9. Finds the average height/score/rainfall/attendance, etc, from the given data	
	2.2.10. Solves one step of daily life problem using multiplication tables of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 where no factor exceeds 10	2.3.10. Demonstrates understanding of the concept of division as repeated subtraction	2.4.10. Solves 1-2 steps of daily life problem involving any 2 of 4 basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using not more than 4-digit numbers at any stage in the operation, and using one or more skills 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.6 and 2.4.8		

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
	2.3.11. Divides a 3-digit number by a single digit number without borrowing and without remainder	2.4.11. Multiplies by 100 mentally where the product does not exceed 10,000	2.4.12. Solves 1-2 steps of daily life problems mentally involving any 2 of the 4 basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with sum, product and dividend not exceeding 100 and factors not exceeding 10 where no carrying, borrowing or remainder is involved	2.4.13. Solves simple problems involving unitary method.	2.3.13. Solves one step of daily life problems mentally involving multiplication and division with 1-10 as factors and divisors and products and dividend not exceeding 100

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
3. Ability to Use and Solve Simple Problems of Daily Life Relating to Units of Money, Length, Mass (Weight), Capacity, Area and time					

3.1.1. recognises coins and currency notes of different denominations

Money

3.2.1 Makes any value up to Re 1 by using varying collections of coins, using real or toy money

3.3.1 Uses real or toy money in currency and coins in examples of 1-step daily transactions with values not exceeding Rs 10

3.4.1. Solves simple money problems with conversion using any 2 of the 4 operations of addition, subtraction multiplication and division,  
e.g. shopping accounts (factors not exceeding -10)

3.5.1 Solves simple money problems including profit and loss, as in 3.4.1

3.5.2. Interprets and prepares simple bills given the rates and quantity up to 5 items

3.3.2. Solves simple money problems using either addition or subtraction without conversion, e.g. simple shopping accounts

3.4.2. Applies a unitary method to buy, i.e. and selling problems

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
			3.3.3. Solves mentally daily life problems involving pause in multiples of 5 and 10, up to Re 1	3.4.3. Solves mentally 1-step daily life money problems involving either rupees or paisa where the sum does not exceed Rs 50 using any of the 4 operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (factors not exceeding 10) without conversion where no carrying, borrowing or remainder is involved	3.5.3. Solves simple problems involving simple interest
				3.4.3. Solves mentally 1-step daily life money problems involving either rupees or paisa where the sum does not exceed Rs 50 using any of the 4 operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (factors not exceeding 10) without conversion where no carrying, borrowing or remainder is involved	3.5.4. Solves mentally 1-step daily life money rupees and paisa where the sum does not exceed Rs 100 using any of the 4 operations without conversion, carrying, borrowing or remainder and multiplication and division by single digit only

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Length	3.1.2. Uses non-standard units such as handspan, human feet, stick, etc.) to measure length of objects in immediate environment	3.2.2. Uses non-standard units (such as handspan, human feet, stick, etc.) to measure lengths of object in immediate environment	3.3.5. Demonstrates understanding of relationship between metres and centimetres	3.4.5. Understands the relationship between kilometers and metres up to 20 of the 4 operations, with operations with conversion	3.5.1. Solves simple daily life problems relating to standard units of length involving up to 20 of the 4 operations, with conversion

3.5.6. Measures straight lines or curves in objects or short distances in the immediate environment in metres and centimetres

3.4.6. Converts kilometers to metres, metres to centimetres and vice versa

3.3.6. Adds two lengths of metres and centimetres without conversion

3.4.7. Solves 1-step simple daily life problems relating to standard units of length involving conversion and only one of the 4 operations and multiplications and division by single digit only

3.3.7. Find the difference between two lengths of metres and centimetres without conversion

3.5.7. Estimate and compares lengths of familiar objects and short distances not exceeding 5 metres in one-standard and standard units

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
			3.3.8. Estimates lengths of familiar objects and short distances not exceeding 5 metres in non-standard units	3.4.8 Measures lengths of objects or short distances in the immediate environment in meters, centimetres (complete units)	3.4.8. Solves simple 1-step daily life problems mentally involving kilometres and metres or metres and centimetres with no number exceeding 100 and no conversion, carrying or borrowing, or remainder. Multiplication and division by single digit only.
				3.4.9. Estimates and compares lengths of familiar objects and short distances not exceeding 5 metres in non-standard and standard units	3.4.10. Solves simple 1-step daily life problems mentally involving kilometres and metres or metres and centimetres with no number exceeding 50 and no conversion, carrying or borrowing, or remainder. Multiplication and division by single digit only.

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Mass (Weight)	3.1.3. Uses non-standard units of mass (weight) such as stones, beads, etc.) to weigh objects in immediate environment using a toy scale/pan balance	3.2.3. Uses non-standard units of mass (weight) (such as stones, beads, etc.) to weigh objects in immediate environment using a toy scale/pan balance	3.3.9. Understands the relationship between the standard units or mass (Weight), i.e. between kilograms and grams	3.4.11 converts kilograms into grams and vice versa	3.5.9. Solves simple daily life problems involving up to 2 of the 4 operations relating to standard units of weight, with conversion

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Capacity	3.1.4. Uses non-standard units (such as cup, tumbler, bottle, etc.) to measure capacity	3.2.4. Uses non-standard units (such as cup, tumbler, bottle, etc.) to measure capacity	3.3.12. Folds the difference in the mass of two objects when the mass of each object is expressed in kilograms and grams without conversion	3.4.13. Understands the relationship between standard units of measure capacity (i.e. liter and millilitres)	3.5.11. Solves simple daily life problems involving up to 2 of the 4 operations relating to standard units of capacity with conversion
				3.4.14. Converts litres to millilitres and vice versa	3.5.12. Estimates and compares small units of capacity in terms of non standard measures such as cups, match-boxes, small bottles, etc.
				3.4.15. Solves simple 1-step daily life problems related to capacity using any one of the 4 operations and involving conversion. Multiplication and division by single digit only	3.5.13. Solves simple 1-step daily life problems mentally involving liters and millilitres with no number exceeding 100 and no conversion, etc
				3.4.16. Estimates and compares small units of capacity in terms of non-standard measures such as cups, match-boxes, small bottles, etc	
				3.3.14. Adds two or three quantities of liquid, and writes the sum expressed in litres and millilitres without conversion	
				3.3.15. Finds the difference between two quantities of liquids when both are expressed in litres and millilitres without conversion	

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
<b>Area</b>					
3.3.16 Estimates small units of capacity in terms of non-standard measures such as cups, match-boxes, bottles, etc.	3.4.17. Solves simple 1-step daily life problems mentally involving litres and millilitres with no number exceeding 50 and no conversion, carrying or borrowing or remainder. Multiplication and division by single digit only.	3.4.18. Measures in non-standard and standard units the perimeters of any surfaces or objects of rectangular, square or triangular shape in the immediate environment (e.g. classroom, notebook, etc.)	3.4.19. Applies the formula to calculate the area of rectangular shapes in the immediate environment such as tables, tiles (non-standard units)	3.5.14. Solves simple daily life problems relating to area and perimeter of a rectangle using the respective formulae	3.5.15. Estimates and compares in non-standard and standard units small areas of areas in the immediate environment such as
3.3.17. Calculates surface area of rectangular regions using non-standard units such as bricks, tiles, match-boxes, etc.					
3.3.18. Estimates small units of areas in terms of square and rectangular objects such as match-boxes, tiles					

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Time					
3.1.5. Names days of the week in sequence	3.2.5. Knows the relationship of days to weeks, weeks to months and months to year 3.2.6. Knows the names of months in sequence	3.3.19. Reads clocks by hour, 1/2 hour, 1/4 hour and five minute intervals 3.3.20. Add hours and minutes without conversion	3.4.20. Estimates and compares in standard and non-standard units small units of surface areas in the immediate environment such as match-boxes, bricks, slates, notebooks, classrooms, playgrounds, etc.	3.4.21. Interprets a calendar	3.4.16. Calculates the duration of an activity/event across a.m. and p.m. 3.5.17. Solves simple daily life problems relating to time, involving weeks, days and hours-minutes
match-boxes, bricks, slates, notebooks, classrooms, playgrounds					3.4.23. Converts hours into minutes and vice versa 3.4.24. Adds hours and minutes with conversion

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
4. Ability to use fractions, decimals and percentage			3.4.25. Calculates the duration of an activity/ event within a.m. and p.m.	4.5.1. Arranges simple proper fractions in ascending or descending sequence with denominators not exceeding 10  4.4.1. Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of proper fractions as parts of regions with the denominator not exceeding 20  4.4.2. Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of proper fractions numbers as parts of regions with the numerator and denominator not exceeding 10  4.5.2. Reduces simple fractions to lowest terms  4.5.1. Arranges simple proper fractions in ascending or descending sequence with denominators not exceeding 10  4.4.1. Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of proper fractions as parts of regions with the denominator not exceeding 10  4.4.2. Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of proper fractions numbers as parts of regions with the numerator and denominator not exceeding 10  4.5.2. Reduces simple fractions to lowest terms	

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
				<p><b>4.4.3.</b> Demonstrates understanding of equivalent fractions of a given fraction (e.g. <math>\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4} = \frac{4}{8}</math>)</p> <p><b>4.4.4.</b> Arranges in ascending and descending sequence proper fraction with same numerators or same denominators</p> <p><b>4.4.5.</b> Converts mixed numbers to improper fraction and vice versa. Denominator not exceeding 20</p>	<p><b>4.5.3.</b> Adds and subtracts fractions and mixed numbers with denominator not exceeding 10</p> <p><b>4.5.4.</b> Solves daily life problems involving comparing, addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers with denominator not exceeding 10</p> <p><b>4.5.5.</b> Adds and subtracts mentally in daily life problems some combinations of fractions which occur frequently (e.g. <math>\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}</math>)</p> <p><b>4.4.6.</b> Adds and subtracts simple proper fractions with same denominators up to 10 and expresses the answer in its lowest terms</p> <p><b>4.5.6.</b> Multiplies and divides 2 fractions with denominators up to 10 and express</p>



Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Percentage					<p>4.5.10. Solves daily life problems involving length, weight, capacity, etc. involving comparing addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of decimals</p> <p>4.5.11. Converts fractions and decimals into percentage and percentage into fraction in lowest terms and decimal</p> <p>4.5.12. Finds required percentage of a given number or measure</p> <p>4.5.13. Solves simple daily life problems involving application of percentage</p> <p>4.5.14. Converts mentally frequently used percentages into fractions and vice versa. (e.g. 50% = <math>1/2</math>, <math>1/4</math> = 25% etc.)</p>

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
5. Understanding of geometrical shapes and spatial relationship	<p>5.1.1. Recognizes and names the four basic shapes—circle, triangle, rectangle and square</p> <p>5.1.2. Draws freehand circle, triangle, rectangle and square to demonstrate understanding of the basic properties of the four shapes</p> <p>5.1.3. Recognizes and classifies various solids in the environment on the basis of necessarily mentioning their geometrical names</p>	<p>5.2.1. Names objects in the environment which have only plane surfaces, only curved surfaces, and objects which have both</p> <p>5.2.2. Draws plain shapes, e.g. square, rectangle, triangle and circle using objects which have straight or curved edges</p>	<p>5.3.1. Recognizes and classifies various solids in the environment with their geometrical names (e.g. cuboid, sphere, cube, cone, cylinder)</p> <p>5.3.2. Draws plane shapes, e.g. square, rectangle, triangle and circle using objects which have straight or curved edges</p> <p>5.3.3. States properties of triangle, rectangle and square</p>	<p>5.4.1. Measures and draws line segments of specific lengths with the help of a ruler</p> <p>5.4.2. Classifies angles as right angle, obtuse angle and acute angle</p> <p>5.4.3. Recognizes right angles, obtuse angles in the environment and pictures of the objects</p>	<p>5.5.1. Draws triangle, rectangle, square with the help of ruler, etc.</p> <p>5.5.2. Draws a circle of a given radius with the use of compass and ruler</p> <p>5.5.3. Knows various terms related to a circle, and their relationship of the objects</p> <p>5.5.4. Identifies whether a pair of simple figures are reflections of each other or not, and can draw the line of reflection if it exists</p> <p>5.5.5. Identifies in two simple figures whether one can be rotated or turned to look like the other</p> <p>5.4.4. Draws angles of different measures with the help of a protractor</p> <p>5.4.5. Classifies triangles on the basis of angles and sides—isosceles, scalene, equilateral</p> <p>5.4.6. Identifies shapes which are symmetrical and asymmetrical</p>

## **Minimum Levels of Learning in Environmental Studies**

### **Introduction**

1. Environment is generally taken to consist of two main aspects: natural and human, i.e. man-made or social. This division is often reflected in the curriculum of Environmental Studies (EVS) were, traditionally, these have been labeled as Parts I and II separately, or Social Studies and Science, respectively. In fact, the total environment should be viewed integratively as the product of the interaction among the man, the natural environment and the social environment.
2. The proposed curriculum plan tries to include all these three dynamic and mutually interactive elements. It has been built around 10 major competencies. The first one is consumed with ones well-being in the context of natural and social environment. The next five deal with the social aspects such as socio-civic environment, the world of work, spatial relationship between man and his natural environment, man's past-present relationship, and some common problems concerning environmental interaction. The last four major competencies relate to selected components of natural environment pressing on the scientific aspect besides the personal and social ones, and include the elements of health, living things, non-living things, and the earth and the sky.
3. The ten major competencies aimed at the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of development together with the content elements associated with them are enumerated below:

#### **The pupil**

- (i) acquires awareness about ones's well-being in the context of social and natural environment.
- (ii) Explores important aspects of one's socio-civic environment and comprehends their working.
- (iii) Knows about various people at work and appreciates the importance about the 'world of work'.

- (iv) Understands and interprets the spatial and interactive relationship between man and his environment.
  - (v) begins to see the relationship between man's past and present, and to hold the past in its proper perspective.
  - (vi) Senses common but simple and easily observable socio-economic situation and problems, analyses them and seeks possible solutions at his level of experience.
  - (vii) Understands the factors contributing to the preservation of good health.
  - (viii) Develops skill in gathering and classifying information about living things from one's environment, and drawing simple inferences.
  - (ix) Observes and examines some common characteristics of non-living things.
  - (x) Observes simple phenomena on the earth and in the sky and draws inferences.
4. It may be pointed out that the proposed scheme of MLLs avoids drawing any hard and fast dividing line between various components of Environmental Studies and expects them to be treated in a correlated manner. In the ultimate analysis, every child has to conduct himself/herself as a socially responsible citizen as he/she grows, has to become aware of environmental conditions and the need to protecting it, and has to broaden his/her socio-economic and scientific outlook with the attainment of greater maturity. It is for the achievement of such broad life a goals that the competencies stated above have to be mastered during the initial stage of education.
5. In order to develop these major competencies grade by grade, they have been delineated into specific sub-competencies anchoring them with relevant content units, and have been presented as a flow chart in a sequential and interconnected manner. The

horizontal relationship of different competencies within a grade and vertical articulation established across grades have to be kept in view in the process of teaching as well as evaluation. Therefore, a particular numbering system is followed in presenting these competencies including pertinent content elements. For example, the sub-competency numbered 5.4.2 means that it belongs to the fifth major competency, for Class IV, and second competency in the study of Progress of Man from Early Times to Present Age (See Statement of MLLs).

6. Each competency or sub-competency represents a specific curricular objective describing expected learning outcomes. Keeping these expected outcomes of learning in view, effective and attractive procedures of teaching and learning should be followed. The competencies under EVS are such that the techniques of teaching can be conveniently made activity-based. The child should, therefore, be given ample opportunities both individually and in groups, as also within the classroom and outside to observe, explore, analyse, interpret and appreciate the natural and social environment of which he/she is an integral part. The textbook and other aids should be used for reinforcement of these processes.
7. Evaluation of learning outcomes should be integrated with the process of teaching and children's activities on a continuous basis. In the first two classes it should be largely observational and oral. Written test may be gradually introduced from Class III but should be supplemented by other techniques. The capacity of understanding and application of knowledge acquired rather than rote memorization should be particularly stressed in formal as well as informal examinations.

**Statement of MLLs in Environmental Studies**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Class I</b>	<b>Class II</b>	<b>Class III</b>	<b>Class IV</b>	<b>Class V</b>
1. The pupil acquires awareness about one's well-being in the context of social and natural environment	<p>1.1. Our body and its cleanliness</p> <p>1.1.1. Identifies the main parts of the body</p> <p>1.1.2. Understands the importance of keeping them clean</p> <p>1.1.3. Recognizes the need of clothes and seasonal variation in them (wherever applies)</p>	<p>1.2. Our food and shelter</p> <p>1.2.1. Understands the need of food for health</p> <p>1.2.2. Sees relationship between unclean food and water, and diseases</p> <p>1.2.3. Appreciates why the house is an essential need</p>	<p>1.3. Rules of safety and orderly behavior</p> <p>1.3.1. Appreciates the need for orderly behavior in home</p> <p>1.3.2. States in queue and waits for his turn</p>	<p>1.4. Precautions against common behavior</p> <p>1.4.1. Identifies common situations leading to accident places</p> <p>1.4.2. Sees relationships between accidents and lack of precaution</p> <p>1.4.3. Knows some basic measures to be taken following an accident</p>	<p>1.5. Care against person of bad habits and bad accidents character</p> <p>1.5.1. Knows about Common crimes in his locality, e.g. theft, decoit, violence and trespass</p> <p>1.5.2. Sees relationship between crimes and bad habits and bad behaviour, e.g. alcoholism, bullying, others, etc.</p> <p>1.5.3. Suggests possible safeguards, as also measure to prevent crimes</p>

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
	<p>1.1.4. Practises personal cleanliness including toilet habits</p> <p>1.1.5. Observes how animals and birds keep their bodies clean</p>	<p>1.2.4. Shares activities to keep the house and surroundings neat and tidy</p> <p>1.2.5. Observes and compares various kinds of shelters including those of animals, birds and insects</p>	<p>1.3.4. Observes important rules of road (as applicable)</p>	<p>2.3. Civic amenities that make our life</p>	<p>2.4. How we manage our local civic affairs</p> <p>2.5. How we govern ourselves</p>
2.	<p>The pupil explores important aspects of one's socio-civic environment and comprehends their working</p>	<p>2.1. Our family and neighbours</p>	<p>2.2. Our neighbourhood (locality)</p>	<p>2.3.1. Inquires about the functions of such public institutions as hospital, police station, post office, panchayat/municipality, court and bank</p> <p>2.4.1. Finds out how the panchayat/municipality is useful for us</p>	<p>2.5.1. Understands broad relationship between the Central, State and local-self governments</p>

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
	2.1.2. Shows due courtesy to elders, peers, etc, in the family and among the relatives and neighbours	2.2.2. Realizes the importance of going to the school, and attends it regularly and in time	2.3.2. Knows about the importance of some district level functions, e.g. D.M., S.P., etc.	2.4.2. Enquires how the panchayat/municipality is run	2.5.2. Describes simple fact about the Union (central) and State Level governments
3.	The pupil knows about various people at work	3.1. Parents and other members of family at work	3.2. Occupations in the neighbourhood	3.3. Life and activities of some people at work: food producing	2.4.3. Explains why the panchayat and municipality are called local-self governments 2.5.3. Interprets the use of terms like 'democracy' and 'union' for our country as unique features 2.5.4. Realizes the importance of the right to vote in a democracy 3.5. Other important workers: food producing articles

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
3.1.1. Observes various members of family at work in home	3.2.1. Observes and lists occupations carried on in the locality	3.3.1. Lists the occupations engaged in producing various articles of daily need	3.4.1. Recognizes the importance of manufacturing articles	3.5.1. Realizes the importance of work of those engaged in transport and communication, e.g. railways, construction of roads and bridges, working of radio, television, etc.	3.5.2. Understands the importance of trade and commerce
3.1.2. Knows about occupations of parents of family for earning livelihood	3.2.2. Finds out their usefulness.	3.3.2. Identifies those who produce food stuffs, e.g. farmer, dairyman, fisherman and herdsman	3.4.2. Identifies some occupations related to them	3.5.3. Gathers information about the activities and life of a few such workers (selected examples)	3.5.4. appreciates the existence of increasingly large variety in occupations and interdependence among them (Extension of 3.2.3)
3.1.3. Shares information with peers about occupations of the parents	3.2.3. appreciates the variety in occupations and its need	3.3.. Describes their main activities and their ways of life	3.4. compares the work of a farmer with that of a craftsman		

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
4. The pupil understands and interprets the spatial and interactive relationship between man and his environment	4.1. Own locality (village/Mohalla)	4.2. Our neighbourhood	4.3 Our district	4.4. Our State, UT and Our Country	4.5. Our country and the World

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
4.1.3. Estimates distances in the locality in terms of very near, near, far, beyond and before	4.2.3. Gathers information about various uses of land features of locality by man	4.3.3 Locates the district in the State and the State in India	4.4.3 Describes main physical features and climatic conditions of the State	4.5.3. Identifies distribution of main physical features on map and describes them	
	4.2.4. Reads information from a given sketch map of the locality	4.3.4. Knows about important physical features, climate, vegetation, crops and industries of the district	4.4.4. Knows the distribution of main natural resources of the State and their importance for the country, if any	4.5.4. Describes main characteristics of Indian climates	
	4.2.5. Recognizes some common trees, birds, crops, etc. of the locality	4.3.5. Traces the map of the district and shows physical features, important places and routes	4.4.5. Understands distribution of main crops (in the context of climate and terrain), important occupations and location of industries	4.5.5. Describes and locates important natural resources of India.	
		4.3.5. Describes life of people of the district (a few selected examples)	4.4.6. Describes the life of typical people in the State (a few selected examples)	4.5.6. Understands the distribution of main crops and location of main industries in India.	
			4.4.7. Knows importance and location of significant places and routes in India	4.5.7. Knows the importance and location of significant places and routes in India	

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
5.	The pupil begins to see relationship between man's past and present and to hold the past in proper perspective	5.1. Local Festivals	5.2. National Festivals and Other Celebrations	4.4.8. Knows how to use an atlas.  4.4.9. Undertakes necessary map-work using symbols for showing distributions	4.5.8. Describes life of people in various important parts of India (a few examples to be selected)  4.5.9. Knows about important items of export and import of India along-with chief land, sea and air-routes connecting India with neighbouring and other important countries of the world  5.4. Progress of Man from Early Times to the Present Age  5.5. Our Struggle for Freedom

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
	5.1.1. Knows simple facts about the traditions behind local fairs and festivals	5.2.1. Knows about the importance of national festivals	5.3.1. Describes the life of the early man	5.4.1. Notices the gradual improvement of tools and techniques of man	5.5.1. Knows how we lost freedom when the British began to rule over us from abroad(England) and how we won it back
	5.1.2. Shares experience with peers about fairs visited and festivals celebrated	5.2.2. Participates and understands the similarities and differences in celebrating national festivals and other celebrations.	5.3.2. Understands why his life was very different from ours	5.4.2. Sees relationship between these developments and rise of civilization (selected examples from India)	5.5.2. Realizes that people in various parts of the country took part in the freedom struggle.
	5.2.3. Knows about the national flag		5.3.3. Understands the mode of his life and circumstances in which he lived	5.4.3. Appreciates the role of science and technology towards modern development	5.5.3. Appreciates the part played by Gandhiji in freedom struggle along with others (some to be selected from the state concerned)
	5.2.4. Sings national anthem		5.3.4. Knows simple facts about the life of people in some important parts of India, 5000 years ago	5.4.4. Knows about important aspects of cultural life, e.g., music, art and sculpture and their importance for happiness of man.' (selected examples from India)	5.5.4. Infers why freedom of the country is invaluable and needs to be protected at all costs by all or us

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
6.	The pupil uses common but simple and easily observable socio-eco- nomic situ- ations and problems, analyses them and seeks possible solutions at his level of experience	6.3. Small family, happy family (small family norms)	6.4. National unity	6.5. Our Development in a fast changing world	<p>6.5.1. Knows about some fast development in the transport, communication, medicine, etc. and the need of our country to keep pace with these</p> <p>6.4.1. Appreciates the need of national unity freedom and making progress</p> <p>6.3.1. Observes the difficulties faced by in small houses live families living</p> <p>6.4.2. Understands how variety in resources, environment and life of the people in our country enriches our unity</p> <p>6.5.2. Realizes the need of peace, hard work and cooperation among all people and all regions for a quick development</p>

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
			6.3.3. Compares the situation regarding over-crowding today with that of earlier days by talking to elders in the locality	6.4.3. Knows important facts about Indian culture and contribution of different regions to its richness	6.5.3. Understands that fast increase in the population of our country is a serious obstacle in our development
				6.4.4. Knows important facts about our national symbols and understands their significance	6.5.4. Knows about population census taken every decade
					6.5.5. Finds out increase in population according to each census since Independence and understands its implications
					7.5. Prevention of diseases and keeping fitness
				7.3. Functions and care of different parts of body	7.4. Nutrition, pollution and cleanliness
7.	The pupil understands the factors contributing to the preservation of good health				

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
			<p>7.3.1. Understand important functions of human body, such as digestion, respiration, blood circulation, etc.</p> <p>7.3.2. Knows how to take proper care of such parts of the body as eyes, hair and teeth</p>	<p>7.4.1. Classifies food stuffs according to nutritive functions and understands the need of balanced diet</p> <p>7.4.2. Knows how food and drinking water get contaminated (Extension of 10.3.14)</p> <p>7.4.3. Conducts simple experiments to purify drinking water</p> <p>7.4.4. Relates unhygienic conditions with the spread of diseases</p>	<p>7.5.1. Knows about major sources of diseases</p> <p>7.5.2. Understands the usefulness of vaccination to prevent communicable diseases</p> <p>7.5.3. Suggests ways of collecting and disposing of garbage</p> <p>7.5.4. Applies simple first-aid skills</p> <p>7.5.5. Reads thermometer to know body temperature</p> <p>7.5.6. Participates in child-to-child programme to save life of ailing infants, e.g. from diarrhoea</p>

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
6.	The pupil develops skill in gathering and classifying information about living things from one's environment and drawing simple inferences	8.3. Living things: their characteristics and classification	8.4. Living things: their usefulness to man	8.5. Living things and environment	8.5.1. Gives examples that animals and plants adapt themselves to environment 8.5.2. Visualizes present and possible future harmful effects from diminishing forest cover, soil erosion and pollution (extension of 10.4.10)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
			8.3.3 Identifies main parts of a plant	8.4.3. Examines the need of caring and protecting animals and plants, and describes simple ways of doing so	8.5.3 Knows the present schemes (a few) to increase and improve forest cover, cleaning rivers, tanks and such others e.g. the Ganga
			8.3.4. Classifies common plants on the basis of size, life span and seasonality	8.4.4. Names the national bird, animal and flower (also state animal, birds, etc. as applicable)	
			8.3.5. Observes food habits of different animals and birds	8.4.5. Takes part in tree-plantation programmes of the locality and appreciates their importance	
			9.3 Common materials and their properties	9.4. Materials (matter) and their properties	9.5. Energy and work
9.	The pupil observes and examines common characteristics of non-living things				

<i>Area</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
			9.3.1. Indentifies common materials on the basis of some easily observable properties, e.g. colour, texture and hardness	9.4.1. Knows the three states of matter-solid, liquid and gaseous	9.5.1. Knows important sources of energy use in daily life
			9.3.2. Classifies given materials according to these properties	9.4.2. Observes the three states of matter in respect of water	9.5.2. Understands how energy helps in doing a work
10.	The pupil observes simple phenomena on the earth and in the sky and draws inferences			9.4.3. Generalizes about inter changeability of these stages	10.4. The earth and the sky
					10.5. Man, science and environment
					10.5.1. Appreciates the importance of science in our daily life
			10.3.1. Earth-sun relation and consequences	10.4.1. Heavenly bodies	

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
			10.3.2 Describes the shape of the earth (evidence of photograph)	10.4.2. Knows difference between sun, earth and moon (simple observable) facts)	
			10.3.3 Relates occurrence of day and night to the rotation of the earth	10.4.3. Recognizes pole star and Great Bear (Saptishi) and uses them for finding direction at night	
			10.3.4. Observes differences in the duration of day-light over the year	10.4.4. Observes phases of the moon	
			10.3.5. Generalizes about the occurrence of seasons		10.5.1. Describes some outstanding achievements of science (discoveries and inventions)
			10.3.6. Observes consequences of the occurrence of seasons (some instances)	10.4.5. Weather phenomena	
			10.3.7. Air in our life	10.4.5. Weather phenomena	

Areas	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
			10.3.8. Explains the usefulness of air	10.4.6. Knows how air and weather are related (certain weather phenomena)	
			10.3.9. Knows how air gets polluted	10.4.7. Knows about different forms of water affecting weather, e.g., humidity, fog, cloud, hail and snow	
				10.4.8. Observes various weather phenomena and records them with pictographs	10.4.9. Soils in our life
					10.4.10. Knows about dangers from the misuse of scientific knowledge, e.g., in war
			10.3.11. Describes different uses of water	10.4.11. Classifies soils of the locality according to sizes of its particles and fertility	
			10.3.12. Knows about different sources of water		

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class IV</i>	<i>Class V</i>
			10.3.13. Locates various sources of water in the locality 10.3.14. Finds out how water gets polluted	10.4.12. Finds out how soil is kept fertile 10.4.13. Realizes the need of protecting soils from erosion	10.5.3. Realizes the need of scientific ways of using environment and natural resources including conservation, e.g. soils, minerals, water and forests (extension of 10.4.13. and 8.52)

## **Non-Cognitive Areas of Learning**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 All-round development of the personality is the ultimate goal of education and, therefore, the learning experiences provided in the school should contribute towards the achievement of this end. Accordingly, the expected outcomes of learning cannot be limited only to the cognitive domain; it is necessary to delineate learning outcomes expected in the affective and the psycho-motor domains also. In contrast to cognitive aspects, non-cognitive aspects cannot be specified as tangible terminal behaviours, since they comprise elements of personality which manifest themselves in interest, attitudes, personal and social behaviour and value systems. That these form integral part of the set of outcomes expected to be acquired every individual completing the basic education programme is well accepted. It is also recognized that unlike learning outcomes in the cognitive domain, those in the non-cognitive domain, particularly the affective characteristics, cannot be specified in terms of minimum levels. Nevertheless, the need to imbibe certain basic values as part of the process of growing and learning at the primary level of education cannot be questioned. In fact, primary level education provides an ideal setting for this purpose as children at this level are at a plastic age and the experience provided to them at this stage can have a more lasting impact in moulding their personality.
- 1.2 Before embarking on the specification of non-cognitive aspects of human personality which every child should be facilitated to acquire through schooling, it is necessary to the affective domain, and the psycho-motor domain has consciously been kept out of the preview. It is considered that specification of psycho-motor abilities are closely linked with such curricular component as work experience and physical education, and demands more elaborate deliberations and independent treatment. Secondly, the affective characteristics discussed in this report do not constitute a comprehensive list of all possible learning outcomes, in the affective domain. This delimitation is deliberate. The qualities which are explicitly

mentioned here are only indicative of the areas which require every school to make conscious efforts for organizing relevant learning experiences. They suggest the essential aspects of personality development which need to be consciously pursued as part of all educational programmes, formal as well as non-formal. It is presumed that the list will be extended and adapted at the micro-level in a need-based manner.

## **2. Specification of Non-Cognitive Areas**

- 2.1** All specifications of minimum or essential areas of learning have a normative basis. This is particularly the case with respect to specification of outcomes in the affective domain. It is, therefore, necessary to identify the appropriate normative base adopted here for deriving the specifications and adapting them in the empirical context provided by daily life experiences and needs of the children. In the present case, the exercise is guided by the set of national values enshrined in the Indian Constitution which have been further explicated in the National Policy on Education, 1986. The NPE-1986 specifically highlights the need for promotion of values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, protection of environment, removal of social barriers, observance of the small family norm and inculcation of the scientific temper. The policy calls for strengthening a world view which treats the whole world as one family by motivating the younger generation for international cooperation and peaceful coexistence; education should foster an awareness of the equality of all by removing "prejudices and complexes transmitted through the social environment and the accident of birth".
- 2.2** Keeping the above policy directive as the broad guidelines the committee recommends that every school should make conscious efforts to develop certain essential affective qualities in all the children, which are discussed below. These have been indentified as the key qualities which would eventually contribute towards personal and social growth as well as national development.

- (i) *Regularity and punctuality:* These values manifest as appreciation for and sensitivity to the value of time and time-bound commitments. Significance of this in every aspect of life and progress needs no special mention. For instance, the children have to develop a habit or style of living where regularity in attending the school daily and on time becomes a part of their natural course of action and are not carried out through external persuasion or coercion of any kind.
- (ii) *Cleanliness:* This refers to the basic attitude that an individual develops towards his or her environment. This attitude manifests in terms of the child's personal habits of healthful living and keeping the personal self as well as the immediate physical environment in a clean condition. This obviously is another key quality which has a direct bearing on the learning experiences provided to the children during their early life at school and home.
- (iii) *Industriousness/diligence:* This does not refer so much to the particular actions the children should do, as to the value they should attach to achieving their goals through hard work and perseverance. It is the inculcation of this quality which prepares the children to undertake goal-oriented tasks, pursue them with patience and complete them in a time-bound fashion.
- (iv) *Sense of duty and service.* These manifest as willingness to sacrifice self-interest for the welfare of others while performing one's duties without any feeling of fear or favour. It is to create in the growing child a sense of empathy and readiness to render help voluntarily to neighbours, peers, handicapped, old people, and so on.
- (v) *Equality:* Acceptance of the proposition that all are equal irrespective of caste, creed, religion or sex requires inculcating in the child a basic mental disposition to view the relationship of self and others in an egalitarian framework. The school experiences should nurture such a view in every child so that

he or she grows into an adult carrying a sense of belongingness to a community of equals, each sharing a common set of rights, responsibilities and obligations to the society. The ultimate goal is to help the children move towards a global perspective cutting across the barriers of linguistic, racial, regional cultural, religious, social and economic differences.

- (vi) *Cooperation:* the value of working together to achieve common goals needs to be imbibed in all children through appropriate experiences of working and living together inside and outside the school. The mutually interdependent nature of human life at local, national and international levels has to be brought home to the children so that they realize the need for cooperative effort. This should of course be done in a careful manner so as not to jeopardize the sense of independence, individuality and spirit of competition in the child which are equally important.
- (vii) *Sense of responsibility:* Developing a sense of responsibility can be seen as the readiness of the child to face difficulties and problematic situations with commitment and conviction while performing various tasks. This requires building in the children a positive self-image and confidence in their personal capabilities.
- (viii) *Truthfulness:* A quality expected in every individual is the basic urge to be truthful in his or her dealings, in every aspect of work and life. This value is so central in determining the behaviour of the child that it permeates all actions giving them the stamp of legitimacy and authenticity. It is essential that in the school and at home children are properly guided and enabled to develop the strength of mind to subject every idea and action of theirs to this criterion.
- (ix) *National identity:* Developing a sense of national identity should be a prolonged and consistent process of inculcating in the minds of the children a sense of respect for the national

symbols, and reverence and concern for upholding the basic values enshrined in the Constitution. This is not developing a blind loyalty to a set of prescriptions but an enlightened understanding of the commonly accepted framework essential for national unity and integration.

### **3. Development of Specified Qualities**

**3.1** Development of specific cognitive capabilities can largely be seen in correspondence with particular subjects of study in the school curriculum. But this cannot be applied with regard to development of qualities in the non-cognitive domain. Objectives in the non-cognitive domain do not lend themselves to be specifically attached to any particular area or subject of learning; rather they are related directly or indirectly to every learning experience provided in the school. Also, while the school will occupy a place of prime importance in developing these qualities, family and community will continue to play significant roles in helping the children internalize these qualities and making them a part of their personal life style. This makes the task of the school with respect to non-cognitive domain a complex and difficult one. Some suggestions are placed here regarding the role to be played by the school, and the parents and community in facilitating the children to acquire the key qualities when they undergo primary schooling.

#### ***3.2 Role of the School***

The school is the place where children are introduced to acting with understanding where behaviour and knowledge are integrated and reflected in their actions. It is the school which in course of time moulds their attitudes, interest, likes and dislikes towards various objects, individuals, issues and problems they are likely to face in their life. Thus, the characteristics of the child passing out of a school is moulded by the kind of curricular inputs prescribed and the way they are transacted in the schools. Needless to say that the schools have to make a conscious effort to organize the learning experiences in such a way that the children acquire desirable cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics in a balanced fashion. As is often pointed out, cognitive objectives have come to

dominate the activities in our schools, invariably at the cost of non-cognitive objectives. It is essential that concerted and conscious efforts are made to organize such learning experiences that develop in the children at least the minimum set of outcomes in the non-cognitive domain.

With respect to the specific role to be played by the school in the process of developing the non-cognitive characteristics four important aspects need to be highlighted.

- (i) *School organization:* The qualities of punctuality, cleanliness, sense of service, cooperation and so on are, to a considerable extent, absorbed by the students in an informal manner from the immediate environment provided in the school. Therefore, it is essential that these factors are effectively reflected in the way the various activities and the physical setting of the school are organized and maintained. For instance, if the school surroundings are kept unclean, or the school activities are organized with a gender bias, it is most unlikely that children develop values of cleanliness and equality of sexes in their own lives. Thus, utmost attention is to be paid for designing the organizational structure, physical setting and learning processes in the school so that 'school' as a whole becomes a powerful instrument facilitating the inculcation of various qualities in the non-cognitive domain.
- (ii) *Teacher:* It is a well-established fact that a major means through which affective qualities are acquired by children is 'observation and imitation' of adult behaviour. Teachers, willy-nilly, is a model that students in the early stage of education tend to follow and, therefore, every teacher bears a great responsibility in his or her personal presentation and external manifestations of attitudes, work habits and styles of living. Teacher should not be seen only as a transmitter of knowledge and skill but also as a trend-setter for the youngsters through personal behaviour inside and outside the classroom.

- (iii) *Curricular inputs:* Even though, to a great extent, non-cognitive characteristics in the affective domain are caught rather than taught', learning experiences in different subject areas have a significant role in shaping the attitudes and interests of the children. It is necessary to have great care and caution in selecting appropriate curricular inputs and properly transacting them in the classroom. For instance, wrongly chosen inputs in language lessons may develop the requisite cognitive abilities but instill undesirable linguistic, regional or racial disposition in the children. In appropriate choice and inept treatment of social studies content may, instead of developing a sense of national identity, lead to divisive thinking in the children. Similarly, right kind of attitude towards environment and personal hygiene are more likely to develop when supported by a proper knowledge base. Thus, curricular experiences are to be selected with adequate attention to their potential for developing not only the cognitive abilities but also various non-cognitive characteristics in the children.
- (iv) *Physical education, work experience and art education:* While the prescribed curricular activities in scholastic subject areas such as language, mathematics, environmental studies may have the potential to develop outcomes in the non-cognitive domain, the emphasis in these is more likely to be on the cognitive outcomes. In contrast, certain areas of school activities such as physical education, work experience, and art education offer more flexibility, freedom of organization and opportunities for natural and creative expression and thus hold greater potential for moulding outcomes in the non-cognitive domain. These areas provide the children with opportunities to more freely explore, experience, and interact with their physical and social surroundings and help them realize the values of natural respect and cooperation, dignity of labour, sense of achievement and identity, and so on. Unfortunately, with increasing curricular load in scholastic subjects coupled with book-centred and examination-oriented teaching, schools have been paying scant attention to learning experiences in these areas. It is

necessary to reverse this trend and ensure that these areas are given their legitimate place in the total scheme of activities in the school.

- (v) ***Co-curricular activities:*** Apart from the various prescribed curricular activities, every educational programme at the first level should have adequate scope for organizing several co-curricular activities and experiences. These activities provide ample opportunity for inculcating various personal and social characteristics in a free and natural context without the constraints of transacting prescribed curricular inputs. It is unfortunate that the potential of co-curricular activities for achieving all-round development of the personality of the children at the primary stage is given very little importance.

### ***3.3. Role of Parents and Community***

As has already been pointed out, learning outcomes in the affective domain cannot be directly related to any particular set of curricular experiences provided through a formal process. Acquisition of these qualities continually take place through informal experiences inside as well as outside the school. The role of parents at home and the community in this process of informal learning is significant. In an ideal situation, the home, the community and the school ought to play a complementary and mutually reinforcing role. But this does not always happen in actual practice. It is not unusual to find parents and community members also equating schooling with cognitive learning with least concern for a balanced personality development of the children. Further, it would be wrong to expect the school to accomplish more than what it can, particularly with respect to development of non-cognitive outcomes. There is no alternative but to view the task as a joint responsibility of school, home and community and it should be our endeavour to facilitate greater interaction among them towards this purpose.

The school can seek active cooperation of parents and the community in promoting this aspect of learning. For instance, Parent-Teacher Associations can play an important role in this

regard. Periodic interaction among parents, teachers and educational administrators of the area can go a long way in setting the tone of the education programmes to give due emphasis to non-cognitive aspects of learning. The efforts have to be multi-pronged which should reinforce the efforts of the school in developing an ethos where a balanced emphasis on all aspects of learning replaces the current practice of over-emphasizing cognitive outcomes.

#### **4. Assessment of Identified Qualities**

- 4.1 When conscious efforts are made by the school to inculcate certain qualities, it also becomes necessary to evaluate the students and ensure that the students are actually acquiring these qualities. But this is complex task and poses a number of questions which cannot be answered with any finality. The school and in particular, the teachers should be adequately made aware of these problems and equipped to tackle them tactfully.
- 4.2 Unlike the cognitive outcomes, affective qualities do not lend themselves to be effectively assessed through paper-pencil test. The teachers will have to depend greatly on personal observation of student behaviour and infer about the satisfactory development of the qualities. Teachers need to be properly oriented to carry out such observations. A related problem is that no-cognitive outcomes are not as tangible as cognitive outcomes are and they are not to be measured with precision indicating the amount of the quality possessed by the children. This makes the process of assessing the non-cognitive outcome essentially judicious and to some extent even subjective. This lays a high premium on the capability of the evaluators that the evaluation of students is not influenced by their own personal preferences and prejudices. Thirdly, non-cognitive outcomes can at no stage be considered as fully developed and, therefore, they cannot be referred to as terminal outcomes at any point. They have always to be seen in terms of 'degree of satisfaction' by the evaluator with respect to the manifestation of different qualities in the behaviour of the students. In a way, non-cognitive aspects of learning will perpetually remain as part of a

process of development and change in the students' personality rather than being the final product of specific inputs and processes. Fourthly, the overt behaviour observed by the teacher is functional and contextual, and can, at times, be misleading. for instance, a child may succumb under unwarranted pressure and threat, and may behave against his or her own will and conviction. Also emotional qualities are such that they are never manifested in isolation and it is for the observer to discern the qualities and draw inferences. It is essential that evaluation of non-cognitive aspects is a periodic and continuous affair as one time observations and references can lead to wrong judgement of students.

- 4.3 In order to systematize the assessment procedures, a few important points need special attention. A well-designed proforma may be introduced in all schools which help the teachers to keep a record of their periodic observations. It is essential to make the procedure simple enough so that all teachers can easily adopt them as part of their regular work. Secondly, it should be noted that the procedure of assessment in non-cognitive areas demand the use of a variety of evaluation techniques many of which our teachers are not familiar with. It is, therefore, a precondition that proper training of teachers is taken up so that they acquire adequate proficiency in the use of various evaluation techniques. Thirdly, evaluation of non-cognitive outcomes cannot be the responsibility of any single teacher, however proficient he or she may be. It has to be a joint endeavour of all teachers in the school. Appropriate organizational mechanism need to be evolved to institutionalize such joint evaluation endeavours. Lastly, as has been pointed out earlier, inculcation of these qualities is a continuous process of development involving not only the school but also parents and the community. Accordingly, it should be appropriate to solicit the involvement of parents also in assessing non-cognitive aspects of learning.

## Towards A Scheme of Learner Evaluation

### 1. MLLs and Evaluation

- 1.1. A sound evaluation programme, if carefully designed and effectively

implemented as an integral part of an overall educational programme, can be of immense value in maintaining and enhancing the quality of learning. On the other hand, if learner evaluation is neglected or if a scheme of evaluation is rigid, ritualistic and lopsided it can prove equally harmful and damaging to the very objective of ensuring the quality of education. Under the MLL programme, therefore, it is one of the essential preconditions that a comprehensive, illuminative and improvement-oriented evaluation plan is properly developed and consistently practised.

- 1.2. While developing an effective evaluation system, the following issues, among others, may be paid particular attention:
  - (a) Prerequisites for following the system of automatic promotion at the initial stage of learning
  - (b) The need for emphasizing mastery learning at the basic stage of education-the question of quality coupled with equity
  - (c) A balanced view of learning and evaluation in respect of both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of development
  - (d) Accountability of the education system and its functionaries as reflected in the actual achievement of learners.

### 1.3. *The Dilemma of Automatic Promotion*

Together with the introduction of a policy of non-detention or automatic promotion in all or initial classes of primary education, a sound procedure of evaluation closely integrated with the process of learning was also to be introduced. In fact, a continuous and formative evaluation procedure is an essential and unavoidable prerequisite for successful implementation of the policy of automatic promotion. It has, however, been observed that there are many instances where the scheme of automatic promotion is uniformly practised but evaluation aimed at constant improvement of learning is either totally neglected or paid inadequate attention. As a result, children often remain weak in the basic skills of reading, writing, and computation besides other aspect of achievement.

Indeed, it is too early to introduce formal Examination at least in the first two classes of the primary stage. At the same time it is essential to check from time to time in an informal but meticulous manner that all children learn basic skills and other competencies which are the essence of primary education.

#### *1.4. The Need to Emphasize Level of Learning*

At the primary stage most essential core skills and competencies are included in the curriculum. The MLL approach implies a calculated effort to include those minimum, essential and common competencies that all children must master. But the traditional concept of '35 per cent pass' prevalent at the middle and secondary stages of education invariably prevails at the primary stage also which indeed is an impediment in raising the standard of learning. At least at the primary stage and in the context of MLLs it is absolutely essential that the mastery level of learning is aimed at. Only when almost all children succeed well in achieving the basic skills of reading, writing, computation, etc. as indicated in the MLL statements that one can be sure of substantial improvement in quality without sacrificing equity. The traditional concept of low level of expected achievement by the bulk of children should, therefore, be gradually given up and should be replaced by the concept of mastery as the expected standard of attainment for all children. If minimum essential facilities and help are given to school and teachers, and if continuous feedback, academic guidance and remedial work are given to the learners, it should be possible for most children to reach the mastery level of achievement in basic competencies at the primary stage.

#### *1.5. Cognitive and Non-cognitive Learning*

Primary education should include not only the acquisition of knowledge and mental skills but also health habits, work habit, cleanliness, cooperation and such other personal and social qualities that form character and personality. It is known that the cognitive elements such as knowledge and mental skill are relatively easier to assess and, therefore, the non-cognitive aspects are either altogether excluded from the evaluation process or they are not

given adequate attention. This imbalance should be eliminated. Simple and manageable means of assessment of non-cognitive aspects of growth must be included in a comprehensive evaluation scheme. Much of this is based on observation techniques aimed at helping children in acquiring valuable personal and social behaviour and in cultivating healthy habits for their well-being.

#### *1.6. Accountability of the Education System*

The accountability of individual schools, school system and their functionaries should depend on the ultimate criterion of education, namely, student achievement. There is need of introduce summative evaluation, achievement surveys and other measures as part of an overall, comprehensive scheme of evaluation of determine accountability and efficiency of institution and their functionaries, and to make other such decisions by administrators, planners and policy-makers based on actual achievement data.

- 1.7. It may be emphasized at this stage that the competencies included in the MLLs become specific educational objectives or minimum, expected outcomes of learning in the context of evaluation. The modality of formulating and presenting the minimum essential levels of learning adopted here is such that it not only helps the primary school teacher and NFE instructor in anchoring the task of teaching to a series of competencies in a progressive manner through various units of study within a grade as well as across grades, but it also assists them and others concerned in conducting competency-based evaluation. Each competency constitutes an expected performance target and each cluster of competencies lends itself to unit testing and formative evaluation. Maximum advantage of this arrangement should be taken by teacher-educators in instituting an integrative, improvement-oriented and competency based evaluation scheme as an inextricable part of a system of basic education for all.

### **2. Some Operational Aspects**

- 2.1 In the light of the above-mentioned analysis and observations, it is

proposed that a competency-based evaluation system be followed as part of the MLL approach to improving quality together with equity. As MLLs are defined in terms of expected attainment of competencies, these competencies themselves should become the basis of developing evaluation tools and techniques, analysis and interpretation of evaluation data, and other such procedures. In brief, a competency becomes a criterion to organize teaching and learning, and it is also used for conducting criterion-referenced evaluation.

**2.2. Evaluation at the primary stage should be essentially used for two mutually reinforcing purposes:**

- (i) To improve students' learning through the diagnosis of their performance, identifying specific inadequacies in mastering one or more competencies or sub-competencies and taking appropriate remedial measures to enable all learners to reach the mastery level. This is a kind of formative or supportive evaluation and is to be carried out by the teacher or NFE instructor as part of the process of teaching and learning.
- (ii) To carry out summative assessment for various other types of decision-making by policy-makers and planners, administrators and community members besides teachers. These decisions may be related to promotion; comparison of performance between schools, blocks, districts or states; maintaining or raising the overall levels of learning, etc.

**2.3. In view of these two purposes, a sound evaluation programme should include, among other things, the following common components as indicated earlier:**

- (i) Continuous informal evaluation integrated with teaching-learning process
- (ii) Periodical evaluation through unit testing for academic monitoring and improvement of performance to reach mastery
- (iii) Periodical appraisal of non-cognitive aspects of development.

- (iv) Summative and comprehensive evaluation for checking the attainment of actual standards of performance especially at the end of Classes III and V through achievement surveys and other techniques for various types of decision-making including quality, equity, accountability and efficiency.
- (v) Pre-testing and post-testing in different classes during the period when the MLL approach is first introduced and also when an intermediary level of learning is further raised to reach the minimum level proposed.

### **3. Assisting Teachers and Supervisors in Strengthening Evaluation Procedures**

#### *3.1. Development and Supply of Test Items and Unit Tests to Teachers*

Normally all teachers prepare their own tests and other evaluation instruments. However, under the MLL programme it is suggested that they should be helped by supplying a pool of competency-based test items, unit test, observation criteria for non-cognitive aspects of evaluation, criterion-referenced tests and other evaluation material in order to encourage them in practising an effective and comprehensive evaluation system. For this purpose, an item bank may be created at the state or district level, either through SCERTs or DIETs as appropriate, utilizing the services of experienced teachers, teacher-educators and evaluation specialists. Teachers should also continue producing their own evaluation material to supplement the common pool. What is equally important is that teachers should use individual test items for continuous evaluation integrated with teaching besides using unit tests for diagnostic purposes. In addition, they may compile summative tests as and when needed utilizing the item pool.

#### *3.2. Supervisors and district-level personnel should also use item pools for academic monitoring during their visits to schools and for constructing criterion-referenced test or parallel tests for summative evaluation in selected subjects at the end of Classes III and V. When an item pool is established and extensively used, it is*

simultaneously necessary to introduce the practice of constructing parallel tests based on a common blue-print. This is particularly needed for establishing comparability of results over years as well as across districts or state level (when the time of testing is not the same).

### *3.3. School Clusters for Cooperating Work in Evaluation*

Where feasible, school clusters or school complexes may be established to help teachers further by creating conditions for them to work together on common issues relating to teaching as well as testing, and sharing their evaluation materials, teaching-learning aids, remedial exercises, etc. there may be micro-clusters of 4 to 8 schools for certain functions and also macrolevel networks of all schools in a block or neighbouring blocks for certain other functions such as conducting a common achievement test at the end of Class V, or organizing large-scale inservice training programmes.

- 3.4. Districtwise and statewise achievement surveys may be conducted from time to time in different subjects and for different classes. The evaluation results should be fed back to the teachers concerned so that they can carry out necessary modifications in their instructional programmes with a view to improving the performance of their respective schools and classes. When the National Evaluation Organization is established such results should be made available to teachers for inter-state as well as national comparison. This should also help individual schools, districts and states to revise and raise expected levels of achievement in relation to MLLs.
- 3.5. As a further support to teachers and learners, it is proposed that competency-based textual materials be produced by integrating learning material with evaluation exercises, unit tests and comprehensive tests, and supplied to teachers for their use in the classroom. This may be developed on the pattern of the IPCL textbooks produced by State Resource Centres for adult literacy. The minimum learning competencies given here for the subjects of language, mathematics and environmental studies are formulated in such a way that they have horizontal sequencing within grade a

vertical articulation across grades where feasible. These competencies can be conveniently utilized for producing graded textbooks having different types of evaluation exercises, remedial exercises, unit test, etc. integrated with the text itself. They can also promote a good deal of self-learning and self-evaluation in the upper classes of the primary stage. There are other similar advantage offered by integrated and graded textbooks of the type stated above. In brief, such teaching-learning material intertwined with evaluation material should provide significant help to teachers and learners in reaching the mastery level of achievement.

#### **4. The Issue of Equivalence**

- 4.1. For various practical reasons it appears inescapable that some basic equivalence will have to be established between the products of formal primary schools and NFE centres. The stigma of treating the non-formal mode of acquiring primary education as inferior to the formal one can be removed only when the quality of education achieved through the former is highly comparable with that acquired through the latter especially in key areas of learning. Such comparability will ensure the possibility of lateral as well as vertical transfer of students particularly from non-formal to the formal system.
- 4.2. The equivalence issue should be seen just as an administrative measure. While an administrative equivalence will be necessary, what is more significant in terms of quality and equity is to establish academic equivalence as well. The MLL statements provide the first major operational step in this direction because they have been prepared by keeping both formal and nonformal learning systems in view and by involving NFE instructors and other functionaries in non-formal primary education together with teachers and others working in formal primary education.
- 4.3 *Holding Achievement as Constant and Programme Parameters as Variable*  
For establishing equivalence between the products of formal and

non-formal primary education and also for raising the standard of non-formal education, it is proposed that the level of achievement of NFE students should be expected at the mastery level in respect of MLL competencies and no compromise should be made regarding the expected standard of attainment. the MLL statements suggest the minimum competencies to be mustered by all learners, be they in the formal stream or the non-formal one. Of course, one or more intermediate levels of achievement can be specified before finally reaching MLL be both formal and non-formal systems in certain educationally backward areas. But mastery of the levels of achievement indicated by the MLL specification should be the target to reach for ensuring equivalence. Accordingly, various programme parameters of non-formal primary education should be examined and modified as necessary to achieve the target. These parameters may include time and duration of study, nature and quality of learning materials, styles of teaching and learning, competency and training of teachers, evalution procedures and the like.

- 4.4. As regards time and duration of learning it is necessary to exercise the principle of flexibility. Time and duration of learning being one of the major programme parameters, it should be allowed to vary within a given range (which is feasible in the NFE system as well as in the formal one), while the level of expected achievement should be held constant and should not be diluted. Also, a radical change will be needed in the nature of learning materials and style of learning. For example, it is important of practise a system of self-paced learning in the NFE programme. Towards this end, the textbooks and other teaching-learning materials should undergo a radical change. Integrated textbooks having in them the competency-based texts, competency-based and improvement-oriented evaluation exercises and unit test, and materials for self-learning to ensure mastery should be designed and provided to NFE learners and instructors. The graded textbooks prepared under IPCL programme for adult literacy provides a good example of a pattern along which effective and well-tested textbooks and supplementary learning materials could be produced. Where feasible, the use of new educational technology should also be made

for both group learning and individualized learning in order to assist the students of NFE programme to attain the desired level of mastery in the core competencies in language, mathematics and environmental studies as indicated in MLL statements. Likewise, there is urgent need to raise the basic competence as well as pedagogical proficiency of NFE instructors who are in essence required to follow multi-grade teaching, self-paced learning and competency-based evaluation. Their recruitment, training and emoluments should, therefore, be reviewed in the light of their responsibilities and innovative and cost-effective alternatives be thought out. Without having a care of professionally competent and dedicated teachers, supervisors and other functionaries of the NFE programme, sufficient justice cannot be done to the millions of out-of-school children who are deprived and disadvantaged and to whom this alternative educational service is offered. These and other pertinent parameters of the NFE programmes should be modified and strengthened with the goal of achieving mastery of MLLs which in turn will result in genuine equivalence between the formal and non-formal streams of primary education. If this is accomplished various technical issues such as holding common or parallel examinations at the end of the primary stage for the students of the non-formal and formal streams, issuance of common certificates and the admission and grade placement of students of the non-formal stream to the formal system would be much easier to resolve.

### **Action Plan for Implementation**

1. Introduction of MLLs in primary schools and NFE centres in the country will require a carefully worked out strategy with necessary phasing. The overall implementation plan may be divided into three or more phases. In the first phase this curriculum, plan may be introduced in only a few selected districts or blocks in two or three states after making a thorough preparation. In this phase, a few innovative centres and ongoing reform projects may also be encouraged to follow the MLL approach in order to raise the standard of achievement. Even some individual specialists working

in places like teachers' colleges and universities may be encouraged by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to introduce MLLs in selected schools and NFE centres.

2. The chief purpose of this phase should be to understand how the proposed MLLs function in both formal and non-formal delivery systems, what kind of orientation and aids are needed for the teacher in order to achieve the desired level of mastery by the students, what kind of modifications and adaptations are needed in the existing textbooks, how exactly should the system of evaluation and monitoring be evolved and made genuinely functional in different settings, and what other administrative and academic measures would be required to succeed in attaining the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of learner achievement. The second and third phases should aim at further refinement of MLLs and other related aspects, and systematic expansion of the implementation programme.
3. It is proposed that in the first phase the number of blocks of different district and states be kept as small as possible, say, about 4 to 6. However, all schools and NFE centres in the block concerned should be selected for implementation. For comparison purposes, matching samples from neighbouring blocks or districts may be taken. In any case, pre-testing must be carried out to establish benchmark data. Appropriate preparatory steps for making this phase most effective should be taken with full participation of local authorities including teachers, headmasters, supervisors and community members. The district level authorities including the office of DEO, DIET (where established), and other concerned agencies should take the responsibility of organizing, coordinating, implementing and evaluating the programme together with local agencies in charge of both formal education and NFE centres. The district should ultimately be treated as a unit of operation for this innovation and for carrying out various tasks involved at the stages of preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and further expansion in cooperation with local authorities on the one hand, and state agencies including SCERT and State Education Department as well as national authorities on the other.

4. In the ultimate analysis, every district should ensure that the minimum essential standards of achievement laid down at the national level in terms of MLLs as a basic and common criterion of reference should be attained by all as early as possible and even go beyond. Different districts and schools within them may need different time frame and resources for obvious reasons and may set their own intermediate phases for moving towards the standards set by the MLLs. However, within the time span of a few years, to be determined locally, all districts in a given state, and all states of the country must ensure the achievement of atleast the minimum levels of learning for almost all children. In certain special programmes and projects such as those launched or being planned in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, entire districts may be selected to introduce the MLL approach and intensive efforts be made to produce transactional and evaluation materials, etc. from the resources available for these programmes.
5. In order to assist the teacher, who will play the most central role in this programme, it will be necessary to prepare teachers' handbooks in different curriculum areas. The handbooks should provide all explanatory notes and illustrative material relating to MLLs and their effective use in teaching and testing. The handbooks should also indicate how existing textbooks could be used to achieve MLLs until such time that the textbooks are revised, if necessary, in relation to this approach. Suggestions for the use of supplementary textual materials, teaching-learning aids and activity-based methods should be made in the handbooks such that student learning becomes meaningful, effective and cheerful. Besides the handbooks for teachers of primary schools and instructors of NFE centres, those for supervisors and other local functionaries should also be prepared to improve the efficiency of their respective tasks in the context of the MLL approach.
6. While the draft MLLs are laid down nationally, they allow full flexibility for the use of local illustrations, materials and environment for the purpose of establishing their relevance and

functionality in the local context. This particular aspect should be clearly shown in the handbooks so that the process of decentralization operates maximally within the national curricular framework. Moreover, this aspect should be sufficiently stressed in the training and retraining of teachers organized on the basis of MLLs. In course of time, integrated instructional materials may be produced which would include textual material, pupils, worksheets, unitwise evaluation exercises and reinforcement materials, on the basis of specific competencies indicated in the MLLs. It should be worthwhile to examine, in this context, the primers produced under the IPCL programme of adult education.

7. As proposed separately, a continuous and comprehensive scheme of evaluation should be made an integral part of the MLL approach to quality control right from the first phase of implementation. teaching and evaluation should be intertwined in various ways including the incorporation of diagnostic testing, remedial teaching, mastery learning and criterion-referenced evaluation including pre-testing and post-testing for monitoring the progress. For these purposes, a large pool of test items, unit tests and other evaluation instruments such as those for vocabulary tests, dictation exercises, mental mathematics and application tests should be prepared and thereby teachers should be given further concrete help in making her/his work optimally efficient and effective. Supervisors can also use this pool of test materials for spot check of student achievement and district level agencies can utilize them for conducting criterion-referenced testing for the comparison of standards and other such purposes.
8. Based on MLLs handbooks, textual materials and item pools, appropriate orientation of teachers should be organized before Phase I begins, and should likewise be repeated before launching Phases II and III under the expansion programme. Similar orientation should be provided to supervisors and other concerned personnel in relation to their respective responsibilities. For all these functionaries a systematic plan of recurrent orientation during the entire implementation programme should be meticulously followed.

- The recurrent training should be of short duration and should be functional and task-oriented.
9. Efforts should be made to involve the local community in a variety of ways. Where local education committees exist, their cooperation and active participation should be sought, cooperation of those parents (among others) whose children do not attend school regularly should be sought by establishing contact with them and regular attendance of their children ascertained so that they do not lag behind in attaining the expected mastery of MLLs. If there are voluntary agencies of individual volunteers in the community or neighbouring communities who can provide guidance and support to the school especially in regard to raising the quality of education, their involvement and participation should also be explored. Such agencies and individuals may include, among others, retired educators or other professionals, personnel from a primary or secondary training college nearby, and officials of health department and other such agencies in a village who are motivated enough to extend a helping hand to the school or the NFE centre from time to time. In brief, full utilization of human, physical and even financial resources available in the local environment (whether village, town or city) should be made for effective implementation of MLLs.
  10. Similarly, for the purposes of getting internal support and mutual reinforcement, not working of neighbouring schools may be introduced where feasible. Such school-clusters or complexes, as proposed by the Education Commission in the sixties, could work cooperatively for sharing experiences and materials, solving certain problems of instruction, evaluation and monitoring among themselves, reducing time and cost by producing tests, remedial materials, etc. Cooperatively, and thus helping one another in improving the quality of the learning process. If the networking or clustering approach is followed, it should be seen that the size of these groups is kept manageable, say, clusters of some 5 to 10 schools in a compact area within a block. Teachers and headmasters may form their councils to run the networks and set agenda and targets for their cooperative work in the light of their felt needs.

11. The implementation strategy, to be effective will need a sound monitoring system accompanied by a resource support system. This should be established at the district level. Sufficient preparatory work should be carried out at the initial stage, a detailed design of implementation charted out, and necessary financial provision made so that the implementation programme once started moves further with full steam and necessary help in the form of training, materials, evaluation instrument for pre-testing and stagewise assessment surveys, etc., the motivation and enthusiasm of all concerned is sustained, and any unforeseen obstacles and bottlenecks are removed in time. This system should also be responsible for the review of MLLs, etc. at the end of Phase I of the implementation programme.
12. At the national level, the Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, should continue to play a leading role at the implementation stage together with NCERT, NIEPA and NEO (National Evaluation Organisation, when established). It is recommended that the MHRD may undertake the following responsibilities, among others:
  - (i) It should coordinate the task of ensuring quality with equity in close cooperation with the state and district level authorities as part of the national programme of universalizing elementary education and providing 'Basic Education for All'. The MHRD should mobilize resources in cooperation with various agencies, motivate the people concerned and ensure political will for implementing the initial and subsequent phases of MLLs in all primary schools and NFE centres in the country as a time-bound programme.
  - (ii) It should periodically review and monitor progress of implementing this programme at the national level and introduce modification so that eventually the ultimate goal of quality education for all children is accomplished. Towards this end, it should conduct achievement surveys, especially in the language, mathematics and basic concepts of general or

environmental studies (social, civic and scientific aspects) and take follow-up action on their findings leading to a drastic reduction, if not elimination, of unjustifiable disparities in the standard of achievement at the primary stage that exist between states, among districts within states, between urban and rural areas, and between boys and girls. For carrying out this work NEO may be established as early as possible.

- (iii) Once the task of laying down MLLs for the primary stage takes shape, the MHRD should immediately undertake a similar exercise for the upper primary stage comprising Classes VI to VIII without which the work done for the first five classes will remain incomplete and will have less chances of success. In fact, this exercise should be extended in course of time up to the end of general education which includes IX and X as well.
- (iv) The NCERT, NIEPA and pertinent agencies in the states should be involved in the implementation of MLLs while the MHRD should continue to play its vital role as an initiator, catalyst and cooperator with regard to resource mobilization and monitoring of results. The NCERT may set up a special unit for organizing different phases of implementation, for orienting teachers and other educators, for developing handbooks and other instructional materials aligned with MLLs, for producing pools of test materials and remedial exercises, and for several other such purposes. The task of achieving quality coupled with equity for millions and millions of children who are expected to receive primary education through formal or non-formal delivery systems is by no means easy. Keeping in view the magnitude and complexity of the task, MLLs Implementation Unit should have a sufficient number of competent and dedicated people representing subject specialities such as language, mathematics and general studies as well as pedagogical specialities such as teacher training, preparation of handbooks and other materials, instructional processes, evaluation and monitoring.

13. After examining the experience of Phase I and introducing necessary changes in MLLs and other related aspects, Phase II may be launched to include the whole district or clusters of districts for implementation of MLLs in selected places. If the experience is positive and resources are available, this programme may be introduced in about 50 districts chosen from different states. All important steps such as those indicated in the previous paragraphs of this chapter should be taken in order to ensure that the ultimate goal of raising the quality of learning to the mastery level for practically all children in these basic subject of study is no way compromised. Again, after analysing the experiences and outcomes of the second phase and making necessary modifications in the MLLs as well as the implementation strategy, Phase III may be launched to extend the programme to all districts in every state/ UT in the country. Needless to state that on the basis of the experience thus gained improving quality and enhancing equity in primary education, further cycles of reform should be undertaken periodically in the light of new needs and developments at the local, national and international levels.
14. A comparative analysis of competencies included in the curricula of literacy and post-literacy programmes of adults may also be carried out to understand the extent to which basic parity exists between different delivery modes all of which are aimed at basic education. Such an analysis may ultimately lead to establishing a common or comparable set of minimum learning competencies for all adults and children in the perspective of life-long learning.

## 15

### TEACHERS FOR UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Seventeen teachers' organisations in Orissa, a state of India have committed themselves to work together for universalisation of primary education in the state.

The long-term objective of this forum called 'Teachers for Universalisation of Primary Education,' (TUPE), is to draw all children in the 6-14 age group into schools. The teachers' commitment extends not only to enrolling all the children, but also ensuring attainment of minimum levels of learning for all and minimising the dropout rates.

A thousand temple walls in Orissa speak of the rich history of its people, bred in a heritage of art, crafts and learning. Acres of green fields, colourful tribal traditions, and up-coming industry coexist oddly with pockets of intense poverty and malnutrition.

The educational scenario is disconcerting. Of a total population of 3.15 million, only 48.5 per cent are literate. Of the literates, only 34.4 per cent are women. Around 20 per cent of the children in the 6-10 age group, do not enter schools at all. Out of every 100 children enrolled in Class 1, only 54 children complete Class 5!

Although there are some 40,000 primary schools in Orissa, and over 10 million primary school teachers, yet for every 38 students, there is only one teacher available. In remote or tribal areas, a child may have to walk about 4 kms to reach a school.

**TUPE's Plan of Action:** In 1992, on 5th September (that is Teachers' Day), some 2,000 teachers gathered in the town of Cuttack, and pledged to work unitedly for the universalisation of primary education. That was the beginning of a massive campaign of mass mobilisation of school teachers, children and the communities as a whole. This was symbolised by means of the "Gyana Jyoti" - a "torch of learning" - that was lit by Orissa's Chief Minister and then carried, by the teachers, throughout the villages and cities of the state. In 70 days over 500 public meetings were held, enroute. In the meetings, the leaders of the teacher's organisations urged the people to enroll their children and ensure their regular attendance and completion of at least primary school level education. On 14th November, the Gyana Jyoti reached Bhubaneshwar, the capital of Orissa and was welcomed by a gathering to over 50,000 teachers and female health workers. The state-wide tour helped create a ripple of excitement and anticipation and an atmosphere of goodwill among the people of the state.

*Whether a tiny hamlet, or a small gathering, the teachers stopped at every place to fulfil their mission...*

*The hills and forests of Koraput, the southern tip of Orissa, echoed the tumultuous welcome that its tribal inhabitants gave to the Gyana Jyoti. The old and the young together greeted the light with music and dance...*

*The journey was replete with symbolic act-throwing of coloured powders, marching bands, a handicapped child receiving the torch....*

*This is just the beginning of a real pilgrimage for Orissa's teachers. The shoulders that bore the Jyoti from village to village must now take on the burden of the job of educating children but with a new enlightenment within their own hearts and minds...*

#### TUPE's Vision

- ☞ Universalisation of Primary Education is a demand from below and we have to go to the masses to have interaction with them.
- ☞ The goal involves drastic social change.
- ☞ We urge the introduction of a common school system for all children.
- ☞ We draw upon the political will of our planners and policymakers.

The next step was to draw up strategies and a detailed plan of action, which was finalised in a workshop held in December 1992. The plan envisaged holding block level convention (in 314 blocks) involving primary school teachers, health workers, and village leaders to generate awareness about Universalisation of Primary Education; to conduct house-to-house surveys and enroll all children (aged 6-10 years) in school by the next academic session; arresting teachers' absenteeism; students' drop-out rates; creating an appropriate learning environment in the schools and ensuring minimum levels of learning; and specific interventions required for improved enrolment, retention and learning among girl children, and among under-served castes and tribes.

**Encouraging Enrolment and Retention:** Blocklevel conventions were held by TUPE in Dhenkanal, Nimapada, Jatni, Tangi Chodwar, Anandapur, Bhubapeshwar, Kendrapada, Aska, Matabadi, Bhadrak Circle, Tirtol, Badachana, Chandikhol, Karlamunda, Kujunga... followed by house-to-house survey and enrolment drives. Large members of never-enrolled or dropout children (6-10 years old) began to be enrolled in the schools. At particularly difficult spots, such as Karlamunda block in Kalahandi district, slates, pencils and dresses were also given as an incentive for enrolment.

Some problems voiced by the people during this phase were articulated as demands by TUPE. For instance the dates of enrolment should be shifted and shool timings should be made flexible.

Children will continue attending school if they enjoy the time they spend there. As a first step, teachers must be sensitised to the needs of the child. There is a serious plan to organise better pedagogical education and training for the teachers, so that they are better equipped with reference to communication and interaction skills, language teaching, and methodologies of teaching. In-service and continuing education programmes will be devised.

At the same time, TUPE emphasises the importance of according full respect to the teachers. Teachers' image and self-confidence need to be enhanced, their participation is to be actively sought, extraordinary achievements are to be recognised and honoured and policies with regard to posting, housing welfare and so on to be rationalised.

Availability of textbooks and other teaching material should be reviewed. Facilities in the school need to be improved.

The classroom should become an interesting place, a place where the child can learn freely. It is suggested that the emphasis shifts from rote memorisation to the actual mastering of basic competencies and skills. Games, stories, and play methods should be encouraged.

Primary schools should be provided within a distance of 1 km, and programmes for part-time non-formal education set up for those children who cannot attend whole-day schools and children in habitations which do not have any schools.

## **16**

### **PROJECT INTEGRATED EDUCATION FOR THE DISABLED**

Some children are especially disadvantaged. At the same time, they are under-served by basic educational services. The realisation has dawned on the part of educationists and administrators that such children need, in fact, special attention. It is the educational services that will have to be appropriately designed so as to reach out to these children. If children with physical disabilities are to be taught, then the methods of teaching will have to be suitably adapted.

The Project Integrated Education for the Disabled, (PIED), has taken up the challenge to bring light to those who have visual handicaps and sound to those who have hearing impairments. The aim is to help identify, diagnose and educate those children who have any of a wide range of disabilities.

The project was launched in India in 1988. At present it is being run in eight states - Haryana, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Maharashtra and two cities, i.e. Delhi and Baroda. So far nearly 14,000 children suffering from various disabilities have been identified.

How are these children identified? How are their disabilities assessed? Sometimes, if the disability is severe, it is obvious to all. Schools have often refused admission to such children.

## Special Materials

Under PIED, a large number of books and handbooks have been developed as well as motivational films, audio-visual material and innovative special education aids. The following extracts are from source books for teachers of hearing impaired and visually impaired children.

### **For the Child with Hearing Impairments:**

Early detection and diagnosis are very important because the first two years of life are crucial in learning to listen and the development of language and speech. Parents and the family can learn how to help their child.

Language acquisition is difficult for the deaf child because language is an auditory vocal process. For the language development of the child, learning to read is especially important. The hearing child learns to read the language he already knows; the deaf child gets to know the language he has learnt to read.

### **For Parents, for Teachers:**

Identify and assess the type and degree of impairment. Observe behaviour patterns and learning difficulties. Make systematic records. Work out specific strategies to help each child.

### **For the Visually Handicapped Child.**

Help the child pick up daily living activities in a graded manner. The visually handicapped child can learn the skills of dressing, toilet habits, eating habits, rolling up mattress, making one's bed, sweeping the floor, combing one's hair, cutting vegetables, washing utensils... The child's readiness counts a lot in the acquisition of skills. Teaching these skills may go along with other subject areas, physical education, and so on.

The visually handicapped child can learn as well as any other child. Not through sight but through touch, through hearing, and through the asking of questions. Appropriate aids and methods may be required, and an appropriate environment.

If the disability is partial, it may not be detected so easily. The child might attend school. Since there would, however, be difficulties in learning, the child would fall behind other classmates, instilling a feeling of inferiority. Most such children drop out of the school system, sooner or later.

The PIED has designed a systematic approach to the whole problem. Its aim is to integrate the disabled children into the existing schools. PIED has a multi-pronged strategy to achieve this end. Most important, the school system has to be sensitised to the specific needs of children who suffer from various disabilities. Parents need to be trained in the care and educational needs of such children. The community as a whole needs to be sensitised.

Training of teachers receives top priority. Teacher training is conducted at three different levels. At the first level, all general primary school teachers are provided an intensive five-day training on special education inputs, so that they develop skills for identifying children with disabilities, both within and outside the schools. At the second level, six-week training is imparted to a large number of teachers, in which they become aware of theoretical and practical issues regarding the various kinds of disability.

At the third level, a small number of highly motivated and interested teachers are selected for a one-year multi-category training program. These become resource personnel in their areas, each serving a cluster of six to ten primary schools within walking distance from the resource centre. Thus each educational block would become self-sufficient to meet the special needs of all categories of disability, as an integral part of the general educational system.

The school teachers contact parents, as well as the general community. Initially many people felt that the project was impractical. But slowly, support from the communities has been forthcoming. Relevant instructional material, resource books, films, slides, and computer programmes have also been developed.

The focus for the next few years is to be on consolidation and strengthening of the existing programmes.

The integration of disabled children into the world is possible if they are first integrated into the mainstream educational system.

*"We need not pity but love...  
not charity but education".*

The PIED experience is providing guidelines for demystification of "special education", ensuring that it is provided within available infrastructure, without waiting for the uncertain availability of professionals.

## 17

### PRASHIKA

Prashika is the primary school programme being run in several schools of Madhya Pradesh, India by a voluntary group called Eklavya. This group was formed in 1982. While preliminary work with primary schools began in the same year, the 'Prashika' was formally named in 1986. The name 'Prashika' is coined as a short form of 'Prathmik Shiksha', which, in Hindi, means 'Primary Education'.

While work with primary schools began initially as a language teaching programme, it was soon felt that it was neither possible nor desirable to separate the teaching of Language, Social Sciences and even Mathematics, at the primary level. The group turned its attention towards the creation of an integrated curriculum, based on interesting activities leading not only to the learning of subjects but also to the over-all cognitive growth of children.

In the earlier phase, extensive socio-linguistic and psychological surveys were conducted. The cultural connotations of literacy among first generation learners rooted in the local tradition were explored. Activities and materials were evolved, and tested, in the field areas. In 1986, all this work was put together to form a tentative curriculum. Members of the group taught this in place of the normal school teachers, during 1986-87. One school was in a rural area—at a village called Pahawadi, the other was in Harda, a small town.

The consolidated curriculum was introduced in several schools, teachers trained, and the programme systematically monitored.

Textbooks evolved out of this process, and were later revised on the basis of feedback from schools.

Special teacher-training methods have been designed, to rid the teacher of his/her inhibitions in dealing with children at their own level. The teachers are acquainted with the need to create classroom contexts that involve and activate children's minds.

The basic focus of the content is the children, their interests and worldview. In other words, the curriculum is child-centred.

The emphasis in the first few years is on 'opening up' the child, removing fears in order to make the learning process joyful and the school a place where the child likes to be. Curriculum learning takes place through activities which involve the learner in a dynamic interaction with learning materials.

Working as it does in physically stringent and materially deprived conditions, Eklavya's primary school programme believes that more important than the materials in the way in which they are created and used. A sensitive and skillful teacher can use any material in such way that children get involved and learning takes place through participation, rather than by memorisation of numbers and paradigms. It has been possible, for instance, to use a simple poem which children love to sing together for exposing children to a variety of processes that underlie the acquisition of complex mathematical and linguistic abilities. This brings into focus the importance of working in close collaboration with teachers: there is no short-cut to this.

Eklavya's other school programmes focus on the teaching of science, and the social sciences, at the middle school level.

In 1982, Eklavya took over the responsibility for running a School Science programme. The programme is popularly known as the 'Hoshangabad Vigyan Shikshan Karyakram', or Hovishika. Between 1982-86 the programme was seeded in 14 districts of Madya Pradesh, and to date over 450 schools are covered, with 50,000 students each year in Classes 6, 7 and 8.

Through the School Science programme emphasis in Science teaching has shifted from content to methodology. Science is taught now through experiments, analysis, group discussions and field trips. Part of the content is tailored around the student's life and environment. A low cost kit is provided to the schools, and children perform experiments in small groups, with the teacher moving from group to group. Such an arrangement changes the standard architecture of the classroom wherein children sit in rigid rows. It also changes the role of the teacher: from being a "fountain of knowledge", he/she becomes friend, philosopher and guide to the students.

Systematic intervention in the Social Science teaching in middle schools was initiated in the mid-1980s. Thus emerged the 'Samajik Adhyayan Karyakram' or Sashika. In the first phase, new curricula and textbooks were developed. In these, emphasis is placed on developing skills of historical analysis, comparative studies, observation and data compilation, mapping, and application of principles to everyday life, and on understanding social processes through subjects like history, geography and civics. Children are encouraged to compare their own social environment with that obtaining in the past and in alien lands. An active learning process is ensured through structured discussions, in lessons which elicit the child's own ideas and information.

A strong component of all programmes is continuing teacher orientation and an entirely different method of examinations - open-book, and with a stress on understanding rather than memorising.

### Spirit of self-learning

In India, everyone knows the story of the little boy named 'Eklavya'. He was an ordinary tribal, with a tremendous urge to learn the art of archery. The teacher he approached refused to teach him, so he practised on his own and learnt the skill anyway. While practising, he would place an earthen image of the teacher in front of him. Later, that teacher demanded the fee: Eklavya's right thumb which Eklavya promptly cut off and gave him. Some lessons from this story permeate the philosophy of the Eklavya group, which has borrowed the name of this remarkable youth. The group interprets the story in a new way. The message today is that education, is open to all children, regardless of class, creed, or caste. Education has a liberating influence with the potential to challenge and change the social equations.

#### Eklavya believes.....

- ☞ That education should first be centred around the needs and thought processes of the child, and only later address the needs of the concerned disciplines.
- ☞ That the teacher's role is crucial not only in the process of teaching, but in the evolution of educational innovations. The teaching community should be given its due in all matters pertaining to education.
- ☞ That the process of education should be one of constant change and evolution in terms of content and methodology.
- ☞ That education equips children with motor and mental skills, as well as methods for analysing the physical and intellectual world. It helps to develop problem-solving skills, the spirit of inquiry and scientific temper.
- ☞ That education cannot be looked at in isolation from the society and environment in which it is situated. It is in fact a means to motivate people to reflect on and improve the conditions in which they live.

# 18

## BIHAR EDUCATION PROJECT

The east Indian state of Bihar, India, is the seat of one of the oldest civilisations in the world. Its tradition of learning and culture have contributed to India's position in the world of scholarship. Yet, today in Bihar every major indicator of educational development is low when compared to the national average.

Bihar is an educationally backward state. The enrolment ratio of 81.61 per cent is well below the all-India rate of 99.96 per cent for the age group 6-10. For the age group 11-14, the gap widens even further. Bihar has an enrolment of 33.48 per cent while the all-India rate is 59.15 per cent. The huge gap in the higher age group is a corollary of the state having the country's highest drop-out rate. Thus 66.37 per cent of the children enrolled in Bihar drop-out without completing Classes 1-5.

With focus on universalising primary education in the country, the first basic education project, the Bihar Education Project (BEP) was born in 1991. BEP was launched with the view to operationalise a comprehensive and broadbased Education for All project.

Known to educationists for having the highest dropout rate of in the country, Bihar is less known as the employer of over 100,000 teachers in the formal schools system and 200,000 in the non-formal stream - one of the better teacher-student ratios in the land.

More important, the teachers' organisations are motivated and willing to work for an improvement of the education system. They have campaigned to involve local communities in the management of the system.

### Goals

The overall goals of the Bihar Education Project are:

- ☞ Universalising primary education for all children at least until they are 14.
- ☞ Facilitating access both through the formal school system as well as through the NFE programmes.
- ☞ Retention of all children in school at least until they complete the primary stage.
- ☞ The achievement of the minimum levels of learning by all children.
- ☞ Modifying the education system to make it more responsive to the needs of women and to ensure that it actively promotes equality for women and facilitates their empowerment.
- ☞ Interventions which provide equal educational opportunity to members of the socially oppressed castes, ethnic communities and the poorest sections of society.
- ☞ Relating education to the living and working environment of the people thus providing closer identification with the benefits of education.
- ☞ Special emphasis on the creation and sustaining of a scientific temper and inculcation of a sense of social justice.

With the aim to catalyse a mass movement in the state through educational reconstruction, BEP focuses on motivating the educationally and economically deprived sections, women and girls, ethnic and tribal communities and members of the backward castes to enter and remain within the school system.

First initiated in three districts (Ranchi, Rohtas and West Champaran) in 1991, the project has since been expanded to include East Singhbhum, Sitamarhi, Muzafarpur and Chatra. The aim is to cover 20 districts by 1995. The district level projects are the middle level

interventions of the BEP. Macro interventions are planned across the state just as innovative micro-projects are initiated in many parts of the state.

The principal objective of the BEP has been to create conditions for universalisation of primary education. The formation of 3,859 village education committees (VECs) has enhanced community involvement. The entry of an additional 1.5 million children into the school system can be directly attributed to the involvement of the community.

The enhanced enrolment in schools is only one result of the BEP approach. Having adopted a holistic approach in preference to the more common compartmentalised approaches - nonformal education, adult education, formal schools - BEP incorporates almost all conceivable programme components related to basic education.

Thus the VECs also supervise the non-formal education (NEF) centres in the project area. Run by the 50 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) associated with the project, 52000 learners today use these centres.

The community ownership of the education system is especially evident in the construction and maintenance of school buildings. Villagers contribute time, land, money and labour to provide basic amenities to school-going children.

Regular and recurrent training of teachers and VEC members has led to increased awareness of the need to educate women and girls. A comprehensive Jag Jagi, (wake up girls), programme has recently been initiated.

It aims to encourage and prepare girls to enter and remain in schools. Setting up of NFE centres for adolescent girls, empowerment through education of women and facilitating the participation of women in VECs and samoohs (collectives) is another facet of the programme.

The establishment of village structures for women's empowerment has helped mobilise the community and facilitated access of women and girls to education.

### Strategies

The Bihar Education Project's approaches and strategies include:

- ☞ The content and process of education.
- ☞ An elaborate system of training of teachers, animators and village communities.
- ☞ Forging an alliance with political parties, social activists, employers, trade unionists, voluntary agencies and teachers.
- ☞ Creating conditions for the genuine and complete involvement of teachers.
- ☞ Village schools and the non-formal system to be made accountable to the community.
- ☞ In-built process for learning, periodic revision, critical appraisals and innovations.

The BEP is administered by an autonomous body, the Bihar Shiksha Pariyojna Parishad (Bihar Education Project Organisation). Both at the state and the district level, BEP is administered by a team which includes people from within the government and outside. At the sub-district level however, the team works closely with local institutions.

This unique, decentralised management structure has catalysed village communities to perceive the education system as community property. The sense of belonging and ownership has begun a people-led and community-centred movement for social change.

It is a movement which is swiftly spreading across the state. The teachers in Jehanabad have taken the lead in improving the quality of education, the Sitamarhi micro-planning exercises have provided lessons for the whole country, in Ranchi hundreds of voluntary groups came together to work for the common goal.

All these and countless other stories have made the BEP a movement cloaked in a project. A movement with the potential to turn Bihar into a model, the rest of the nation would vie to imitate.

## 19

### SHIKSHAK SAMAKHYA PROJECT

The aim of the Shikshak Samakhya Project is the empowerment of the teacher. An empowered teacher can provide effective education by improving his/her teaching.

‘Shikshak Samakhya’ literally translates as ‘Teachers’ Empowerment’.

The Shikshak Samakhya Project was launched in September 1992. It is envisaged as an important part of the strategy for achieving Universal primary Education in Madhya Pradesh India.

Madhya Pradesh is the largest state in India and has a wide variety of cultural zones. It was recognised that a continuous teacher education programme, even if it is experimental, should be tried in more than one place to ensure that it could be replicated in similar areas. Therefore, five districts were selected for the initial phase of this project of teacher education: Raigarh, Jabalpur, Tikamgarh, Dhar, and Raisen. There are over 23,000 primary school teachers in the five project districts.

Madhya Pradesh is one of the educationally most backward states in the country. Its overall literacy level is a mere 43.45 per cent. Enrolment in primary school is reported to be as high as 83.86 per cent, but the dropout rate of 34 per cent (between Classes 1 and 5) considerably brings down the effective level.

The major objective of the Shikshak Samakhya project is to develop a replicable strategy for improving the quality of primary education in

the selected districts, with the aim of achieving Universal Primary education, (UPE), throughout the state.

The project, besides enhancing the competence of the teachers, also provides for making the classroom an attractive place to be in and evolution of effective and relevant teaching-learning materials and aids through a participative process.

There are some basic assumptions on which the project has been designed. These are:

- All parents want their children to go to school and learn.
- Parents will send their children to school if they learn in school. Children will come to school regularly if they find the learning process enjoyable and attractive.
- Financial and non-financial incentives are poor substitutes to good and enjoyable learning in the classroom.
- The community will support the teacher and will accept the school as its own when and only when they find their children are learning well.
- India, being a poor country, has to find low cost yet high quality solutions to the problems of primary education.
- About 10 per cent of teachers will teach under any circumstances, while the large majority has to be motivated to teach. Settling of all administrative and financial claims, and ensuring promotional channels as well as opening for professional growth, will go a long way.
- Teachers will become highly motivated if they are involved in decision-making in the project activities. If they prepare their own teaching-learning materials they will in the process discover their hidden talents as well as gain recognition from their local community.

Five critical workshops were organised in which a consensus about the basic strategy of the project was developed. Resource centres were

established, each of which covers approximately 30 primary school teachers within a range of 8 to 10 kilometers. These teachers meet once a month in their respective centres to discuss their problems, their experiences, and suggestions to make their teaching interesting. These resource centres have been provided with materials. The teachers have also been provided training and regular academic support.

In Badnawar block of Dhar district, 23 resource centres were set up, and subsequently in each of the 186 primary schools of the block, teachers began to get interested in the project. Within a year, there has been a remarkable change in the ethos of the primary schools of Badnawar. Says Sardar Singh Rathore, Head Master, Nagda, Badnawar block, "The project has helped the teachers regain their lost pride, dignity, self respect and self esteem. Not only are they enjoying their work of teaching in the classrooms, but they have been able to make teaching so interesting and effective that children are eager to come to the school. The latent qualities and talent of many teachers have not only come into the open but have been widely recognised and appreciated. Seeing the children learning and longing to go to school, the parents and community have come forward to support the teacher and the school. This change of attitude has given the teachers a greater desire and has motivated them to work still harder".

The educational changes taking place in Badnawar are rapidly spreading to the other blocks of the district as well as other districts. Badnawar has demonstrated that the unachievable is easily attainable. With this achievement in Badnawar and the continuous academic and moral support of the teachers of Badnawar to all the blocks in the district, those involved are very hopeful and confident of achieving UPE in the whole district and even the entire state.

Seeing the cost-effective and rapid success of the project, the Madhya Pradesh government has recommended its adoption for all the schools of the entire state - that is, some 7,70,000 schools.

Already, the Shikshak Samakhya strategy has been integrated into the district plans of 20 districts. It has taken root in many areas of the state and has created its own demand.

## 20

### MAHILA SAMAKYA

"To empower women to take control of their own lives". With this aim, the project provides the crucial conceptual and practical link between empowerment and education. Working on the premise that empowerment is essential for women to be active participants in the educational process, Mahila Samakhya (Women's Empowerment) "presupposes that education can be a decisive intervention in the process towards women's equality".

Mahila Samakhya was born from the need to translate the National Policy on Education's vision that "education can be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women". Operationalising this commitment, literacy is perceived as one component of an overall strategy of empowerment.

Thus the project attempts to create a demand for literacy but in keeping with the overall philosophy of moving at a pace determined by the women. Without the pressure to fulfil quantitative targets, resource persons and field staff have more time to catalyse an attitudinal change in the community.

Launched in 10 districts spread over three states in April 1989, the project today covers 14 districts in four states. The states of Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh where the project was launched present diverse sociological, economic and even physical profiles. Last year, the project was extended to two districts in Andhra Pradesh. Soon the project will be extended to cover more districts in the participating states.

### **Agenda**

**One of the most interesting aspect of Mahila Samakhya is the articulation of a 10-point agenda on which no compromise is entertained. These inviolable principles provide a guide which will underline evolving strategies and will be the basis for mobilisation for education. They are:**

- The initial phase, when women are consolidating their independent time and space is not hurried or short-circuited.
- Women participants in a village determine the form, nature, content and timing of all the activities in their village.
- The role of project functionaries, officials and other agencies is facilitative and not directive.
- Planning, decision-making and evaluation processes at all levels are accountable to the collective of village women.
- Education is understood as a process which enables women to question, conceptualise, seek answers, act, reflect on their actions and raise new questions. Education is not to be confused with mere literacy.
- Acceptance that as an "environment of learning" is being created what women decide to learn first may not be reading or writing. Women's priorities or learning must always be respected.
- Acceptance that given the time, support and catalysts for such reflection women are of their own volition seeking knowledge, with which to gain greater control over their lives.
- The educational process and methodology must be based on respect for women's existing knowledge, experience and skill.
- Every intervention and interaction occurring in the project must be a microcosm of the large process of change; the environment of learning, the respect and equality, the time and space, the room for individual uniqueness and variation must be experienced in every component of the project.
- A participatory selection process is followed to ensure that the project functionaries at all levels are committed to working among poor women and that they are free of caste/community prejudices.

In over 1200 villages today, Mahila Sanghas (women's collectives) have grown into a tangible force based on the collective determination of the village women. They feel the need for literacy urgently as they gain confidence and want more information and knowledge.

Sahayoginis (Guides) are the initiators and mentors of Sangha work. Living in one of the 10 villages she coordinates, facilitates and guides the collectives. The role of the Sahayogini constantly changes. While in the initial phase the women's fears have to be soothed, as the Sangha evolves, the Shayogini has to provide information and link each Sangha with the support system at the district, state and national levels.

The recruitment of project personnel at all levels emphasises an ability to communicate, a desire to work with women and an awareness of the need to grow and evolve with the Sanghas.

The Sakhi or Sahayaki (Friend) are the focal point of all Samakhya work in a village. Women from the same village, they are expected to grow with the Sangha. Selected a few months after the initiating to the project in the village, the Sakhi is elected from among the Sangha members. The position is usually rotated among the women.

In a majority of the cases, the Sakhis are illiterate and learn with the rest of the Sangha at the pace set by the group. Being pivotal to project work, the Sakhis work closely with the Sahayoginis whom they meet three to four times a month when the Sahaygin visits the village.

The flexible project framework and diversity of the states, have seen different models of Sakhi-Shayogini-Sangha relationships emerge.

Sensitivity to regional diversity has manifested itself in different ways especially the remarkable gains made by the women in porject areas.

Thus in Bidar district of Karnataka, the implementation unit with the help of a local voluntary agency created learning materials of which the women could relate.

The teacher training-cum-literacy workshops provide maximum possilbe flexibility on the pace of learning and timing of classes.

In the largely tribal district of Sabarkantha in Gujarat, a self-learning primer based on the lifehistory of a local village woman has been developed. The Sahayoginis and Sakhis in Sabarkantha are also trying to produce educational material in local dialects.

One of the most interesting and innovative experiments has been the Udan Khatolas or creative children's education in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh.

The project in four states has touched the lives of some of the most oppressed communities in the country. Finding words of articulate problems and gaining strength from each other, these women are shedding the baggage of social discrimination. Education, under *Mahila Samakhya*, opens vistas not just to read and write but to organise for change.

## 21

### NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION

Ernakulam district is 100 per cent literate. Even from a state regularly compared to the most advanced nations, this was news. In the space of one year, all 1,85,000 illiterate people in Ernakulam district were taught to read, write, add, subtract, multiply and divide. At the end of the year, one district in India had eradicated illiteracy.

A small district in Kerala, India's most educationally advanced state, Ernakulam, was an unlikely start for a national mission to eradicate illiteracy.

Yet a year later, the Ernakulam experience was accepted as the model for a mass campaign to literacy. To rewind a little, in 1988, India launched a National Literacy Mission with the objective: 80 million young and illiterate citizens between the ages of 15-35 should become at least functionally literate by 1995 and all Indians should be functionally literate by the year 2001.

In a country which has worshipped learning for centuries and where knowledge-seekers are placed on pedestal, the mission's success was guaranteed.

Through the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) the mission has attempted a national awakening. Today it covers more than 200 districts in the country. More than five million volunteers, two-thirds of whom are women, have been mobilised. In just five years, 33 million people have been made functionally literate. The figures, though impressive, do

### Stepping stones

- Conducting an area survey to identify illiterate adults. The meeting with the villagers is also used to introduce them to the campaign and the need to be literate.
- Involving the entire community in the exercise. Educated persons could double as motivators and volunteer-teachers. The voluntary character of the campaign needs to be emphasised.
- Locating the adult education centres in convenient places. The decision on where the centres should be located needs to be taken in consultation with the entire community and especially the potential learners.
- Requisitioning of teaching/learning materials. Providing a welcoming touch to the centre. Potential learners and other members of the community could be asked to help set up the centre. Creating a sense of ownership and participation of the movement.
- Determining a reasonable time-frame within which total literacy can be achieved. Again members of the community would need to be involved in deciding the pace and rhythm at which the adult learners are comfortable

not reflect the innovative mobilisation techniques and the novel management structure which have made this effort successful.

The success has led the nation to now aim at making 100 million people literate by mobilising 10 million volunteers by mid-1998.

The mass contact programme which launched the TLC was also a giant, nation-wide enlistment of learners, volunteer-teachers for literacy. The system of using three grade primers kept a constant target within reach of the learners. The levels of achievement were thus easy to grade and evaluate.

The TLCs used a multi-media approach to recruit learners and volunteer-teachers. Both traditional and mass media were utilised to spread the message quickly throughout the country. The jathas were part of a media blitzkrieg, playing dual roles of motivator and awareness-raising. Puppet shows, kala jathas (cultural troupes), which included folk artistes, school teachers and volunteers covered the country informing and motivating people to learn and created an environment supportive of learning.

The Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti (India committee for scientific knowledge) set up in 1989, was mandated to popularise the need for literacy.

The jatha planned for 1990 promoted the idea of literacy and science for national integration and self-reliance. As the BGVS document admits, "a literacy programme wherein millions of volunteers are engaged in making tens of millions of persons literate may release social forces of such magnitude that a revolution may be the result". The jatha was consciously moulded to catalyse revolutionary social change. With jathas between 1990 and 1992, the TLCs took root across the country.

The national campaign was coordinated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in different areas. Their intimate knowledge of the region, problems and local people helped accelerate the process from mere motivation to basic literacy.

Dubbed the 'area approach', the mission asked NGOs to choose a village, cluster, block, municipal area or even a complete district. In over 40 districts, TLCs are being conducted by a wide variety of NGOs.

The success of the TLCs in mobilising communities to participate in schemes like 'Each One Teach One' as learners or volunteer-teachers would have flopped but for the exceptional training programme.

The programme places a premium on commitment, knowledge of the situation at the grassroots and working in the field. Thus all levels of trainers be they key resource persons, master trainers or the lakhs of volunteers, all are put through a short but intensive training programme.

In the case of volunteer-teachers, the training is conducted throughout the year before the start of the campaign, then after two months and again after a six month period.

This only partly explains why 30 million Indians are today motivated to achieve literacy. As an activist/volunteer in Karnataka comments: "The atmosphere today shows that the real leaders of the campaign are the neo-literates themselves. Our success lies in this".

## **WORLD DECLARATION ON EDUCATION FOR ALL**

*Meeting Basic Learning Needs*

### **PREAMBLE**

More than 40 years ago, the nations of the world, speaking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserted that "everyone has a right to education". Despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, the following realities persist :

- More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling;
- More than 960 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate, and functional illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, industrialized and developing;
- More than one-third of the world's adults have no access to the printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape, and adapt to, social and cultural change; and
- More than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills;

At the same time, the world faces daunting problems, notably: mounting debt burdens, the threat of economic stagnation and decline, rapid population growth, widening economic disparities among and within nations, war, occupation, civil strife, violent crime, the preventable deaths of millions of children and widespread environmental degradation. These problems constrain efforts to meet basic learning needs, while the lack of basic education among a significant proportion of the population prevents societies from addressing such problems with strength and purpose.

These problems have led to major setbacks in basic education in the 1980s in many of the least developed countries. In some other countries, economic growth has been available to finance education expansion, but even so, many millions remain in poverty and unschooled or illiterate. In certain industrialized countries, too, cutbacks in government expenditure over the 1980s have led to the deterioration of education.

Yet the world is also at the threshold of a new century, with all its promise and possibilities. Today, there is genuine progress towards peaceful detente and greater cooperation among nations. Today, the essential rights and capacities of women are being realized. Today, there are many useful scientific and cultural developments. Today, the sheer quantity of information available in the world - much of it relevant to survival and basic well-being - is exponentially greater than that available only a few years ago, and the rate of its growth is accelerating. This includes information about obtaining more life-enhancing knowledge - or learning how to learn. A synergistic effect occurs when important information is coupled with another modern advance - our new capacity to communicate.

These new forces, when combined with the cumulative experience to reform, innovation, research and the remarkable educational progress of many countries, make the goal of basic education for all - for the first time in history - an attainable goal.

Therefore, we participants in the World Conference on Education for All, assembled in Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March, 1990:

*Recalling that education is fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world;*

*Understanding that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, and international cooperation;*

*Knowing that education is an indispensable key to, though not a sufficient condition for, personal and social improvement;*

*Recognizing that traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and capacity to both define and promote development;*

*Acknowledging that, overall, the current provision of education is seriously deficient and that it must be made more relevant and qualitatively improved, and made universally available;*

*Recognizing that sound basic education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus to self-reliant development; and*

*Recognizing the necessity to give to present and coming generations an expanded vision of, and a renewed commitment to, basic education to address the scale and complexity of the challenge;*

Proclaim the following

*World Declaration on Education for All:  
Meeting Basic Learning Needs.*

## **EDUCATION FOR ALL : THE PURPOSE**

### **ARTICLE . MEETING BASIC LEARNING NEEDS**

1. **Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.** These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content ( such as knowledge, skills,

values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time.

2. The satisfaction of these needs empowers individuals in any society and confers upon them a responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage, to promote the education of others, to further the cause of social justice, to achieve environmental protection, to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems which differ from their own, ensuring that commonly accepted humanistic values and human rights are upheld, and to work for international peace and solidarity in an interdependent world.
3. Another and no less fundamental aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth.
4. Basic education is more than an end in itself. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training.

## **EDUCATION FOR ALL: AN EXPANDED VISION AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT**

### **ARTICLE 2 SHAPING THE VISION**

1. To serve the basic learning needs of all requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an "expanded vision" that surpasses present resources levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices.

New possibilities exist today which result from the convergence of the increase in information and the unprecedented capacity to communicate. We must seize them with creativity and a determination for increased effectiveness.

2. As elaborated in Articles 3-7, the expanded vision encompasses:
  - Universalizing access and promoting equity;
  - Focussing on learning;
  - Broadening the means and scope of basic education;
  - Enhancing the environment for learning;
  - Strengthening partnerships.
3. The realization of an enormous potential for human progress and empowerment is contingent upon whether people can be enabled to acquire the education and start needed to tap into the ever-expanding pool of relevant knowledge and the new means for sharing this knowledge.

### ***ARTICLE 3 UNIVERSALIZING ACCESS AND PROMOTING EQUITY***

1. **Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults.** To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded, and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities.
2. For basic education to be equitable, all children, youth and adults must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
3. The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.

4. An active commitment must be made to removing educational disparities. Underserved groups - the poor; street and working children; rural and remote populations; nomads and migrant workers; indigenous peoples; ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities; refugees; those displaced by war; and people under occupation - should not suffer any discrimination in access to learning opportunities.
5. The learning needs of the disabled demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system.

#### *ARTICLE 4 . FOCUSsing ON LEARNING ACQUISITION*

Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development - for an individual or for society - depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e. whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values. The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on actual learning acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment, continued participation in organized programmes and completion of certification requirements. Active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable in assuring learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potential. It is, therefore, necessary to define acceptable levels of learning acquisition for educational programmes and to improve and apply systems of assessing learning achievement.

#### *ARTICLE 5 . BROADENING THE MEANS AND SCOPE OF BASIC EDUCATION*

The diversity, complexity, and changing nature of basic learning needs of children, youth and adults necessitates broadening and constantly redefining the scope of basic education to include the following components :

- *Learning begins at birth.* This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through

arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programmes, as appropriate.

- *The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling.* Primary education must be universal, ensure that the basic learning needs of all children are satisfied, and take into account the culture, needs, and opportunities of the community. Supplementary alternative programmes can help meet the basic learning needs of children with limited or no access to formal schooling, provided that they share the same standards of learning applied to schools, and are adequately supported.
- *The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems.* Literacy programmes are indispensable because literacy is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other life skills. Literacy in the mother-tongue strengthens cultural identity and heritage. Other needs can be served by: skills training, apprenticeships, and formal and non-formal education programmes in health, nutrition, population, agricultural techniques, the environment, science, technology, family life, including fertility awareness, and other societal issues.
- *All available instruments and channels of information, communications, and social action could be used to help convey essential knowledge and inform and educate people on social issues.* In addition to the traditional means, libraries, television, radio and other media can be mobilized to realize their potential towards meeting basic education needs of all.

These components should constitute an integrated system - complementary, mutually reinforcing, and of comparable standards, and they should contribute to creating and developing possibilities for lifelong learning.

**ARTICLE 6 . ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING**

Learning does not take place in isolation. Societies, therefore, must ensure that all learners receive the nutrition, health care, and general physical and emotional support they need in order to participate actively in and benefit from their education. Knowledge and skills that will enhance the learning environment of children should be integrated into community learning programmes for adults. The education of children and their parents or other caretakers is mutually supportive and this interaction should be used to create, for all, a learning environment of vibrancy and warmth.

**ARTICLE 7 . STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS**

National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary : partnerships among all sub-sectors and forms of education, recognizing the speical role of teachers and that of administrators and other eductional personnel; partnerships between education and other government non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups, and families. The recognition of the vital role of both families and teachers is particularly important. In this context, the terms and conditions of service of teachers and their status, which constitute a determining factor in the implementation of education for all, must be urgently improved in all countries in line with the joint ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers (1966). Genuine partnerships contribute to the planning, implementing, managing and evaluating of basic education programmes. When we speak of "an expanded vision and a renewed commitment", partnerships are at the heart of it.

**EDUCATION FOR ALL : THE REQUIREMENTS****ARTICLE 8 . DEVELOPING A SUPPORTING POLICY CONTEXT****1. Supportive policies in the social, cultural, and economic sectors**

**are required in order to realize the full provision and utilization of basic education for individual and societal improvement.** The provision of basic education for all depends on political commitment and political will backed by appropriate fiscal measures and reinforced by educational policy reforms and institutional strengthening. Suitable economic, trade, labour, employment and health policies will enhance learners' incentives and contributions to societal development.

2. Societies should also insure a strong intellectual and scientific environment for basic education. This implies improving higher education and developing scientific research. Close contact with contemporary technological and scientific knowledge should be possible at every level of education.

#### **ARTICLE 9 MOBILIZING RESOURCES**

1. If the basic learning needs of all are to be met through a much broader scope of action than in the past, it will be essential to mobilize existing and new financial and human resources, public, private and voluntary. All of society has a contribution to make, recognizing that time, energy and funding directed to basic education are perhaps the most profound investment in people and in the future of a country which can be made.
2. Enlarged public-sector support means drawing on the resources of all the government agencies responsible for human development, through increased absolute and proportional allocations to basic education services with the clear recognition of competing claims on national resources of which education is an important one, but not the only one. Serious attention to improving the efficiency of existing educational resources and programmes will not only produce more, it can also be expected to attract new resources. The urgent task of meeting basic learning needs may require a reallocation between sectors, as, for example, a transfer from military to educational expenditure. Above all, special protection for basic education will be required in countries undergoing

structural adjustment and facing severe external debt burdens. Today, more than ever, education must be seen as a fundamental dimension of any social, cultural, and economic design.

#### **ARTICLE 10 . STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

- 1. Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities.** All national have valuable knowledge and experiences to share for designing effective educational policies and programmes.
- 2. Substantial and long-term increases in resources for basic education will be needed.** The world community, including intergovernmental agencies and institutions, has an urgent responsibility to alleviate the constraints that prevent some countries from achieving the goal of education for all. It will mean the adoption of measures that augment the national budgets of the poorest countries or serve to relieve heavy debt burdens. Creditors and debtors must seek innovative and equitable formulae to resolve these burdens, since the capacity of many developing countries to respond effectively to education and other basic needs will be greatly helped by finding solutions to the debt problem.
- 3. Basic learning needs of adults and children must be addressed wherever they exist.** Least developed and low-income countries have special needs which require priority in international support for basic education in the 1990s..
- 4. All nations must also work together to resolve conflicts and strife, to end military occupations, and to settle displaced populations, or to facilitate their return to their countries of origin, and ensure that their basic learning needs are met.** Only a stable and peaceful environment can create the conditions in which every human being, child and adult alike, may benefit from the goals of this Declaration.

**We, the participants in the World Conference on Education for All, reaffirm the right of all people to education.** This is the foundation of our determination, singly and together, to ensure education for all.

We commit ourselves to act cooperativeley through our own spheres of responsibility, taking all necessary steps to achieve the goals of education for all. Together we call on governments, concerned organizations and individuals to join in this urgent undertaking.

The basic learning needs of all can and must be met. There can be no more meaningful way to begin the International Literacy Year, to move forward the goals of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-92), the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-97), the Fourth United National Development Decade (1991-2000), of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. There has never been a more propitious time to commit ourselves to providing basic learninig opportunities for all the people of the world.

We adopt, therefore, this *World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learninig Needs* and agree on the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*, to achieve the goals set forth in this *Declaration*.

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## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TO MEET BASIC LEARNING NEEDS

*Guidelines for Implementing  
the  
World declaration on Education for All*

### INTRODUCTION

1. This *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* derives from the *World Declaration on Education for All*, adopted by the World Conference on Education for All, which brought together representatives of governments, international and bilateral development agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Based on the best collective knowledge and the commitment of these partners, the *Framework* is intended as a reference and guide for national governments, international organizations, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and all those committed to the goal of Education for All, formulating their own plans of action for implementing the *World Declaration*. It describes three broad levels of concerted action: (i) direct action within individual countries, (ii) co-operation among groups of countries sharing certain characteristics and concerns, and (iii) multilateral and bilateral co-operation in the world community.

2. Individual countries and groups of countries, as well as international, regional and national organizations may use the *Framework* to develop their own specific plans of action and programmes in line with their particular objectives, mandates and constituencies. This indeed has been the case in the ten-year experience of the UNESCO Major Project on Education for Latin America and the Caribbean. Further examples of such related initiatives are the UNESCO Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 25th session (1989); the ISESCO Special Programme (1990-2000); the current review by the World Bank of its policy for primary education; and USAID's programme for Advancing Basic Education and Literacy. Insofar as such plans of action, policies and programmes are consistent with this Framework, efforts throughout the world to meet basic learning needs will converge and facilitate co-operation.
3. While countries have many common concerns in meeting the basic learning needs of their populations, these concerns do, of course, vary in nature and intensity from country to country depending on the actual status of basic education, as well as the cultural and socio-economic context. Globally, by the year 2000, if enrolment rates remain at current levels, there will be more than 160 million children without access to primary schooling simply because of population growth. In much of sub-Saharan Africa and in many low income countries elsewhere, the provision of universal primary education for rapidly growing numbers of children remains a long-term challenge. Despite progress in promoting adult literacy, most of these same countries still have high illiteracy rates, while the numbers of functionally illiterate adults continue to grow and constitute a major social problem in much of Asia and the Arab States, as well as in Europe and North America. Many people are denied equal access on grounds of race, gender, language, disability, ethnic origin, or political convictions. In addition, high drop-out rates and poor learning achievement are commonly recognized problems throughout the world. These very general characterizations illustrate the need for decisive action on a large scale, with clear goals and targets.

## GOALS AND TARGETS

4. The *ultimate goal* affirmed by the *the World Declaration on Education for All* is to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth, and adults. The long-term effort to attain that goal can be maintained more effectively if intermediate goals are established and progress towards these goals is measured. Appropriate authorities at the national and subnational levels may establish such intermediate goals, taking into account the objectives of the *Declaration* as well as overall national development goals and priorities.
5. Intermediate goals can usefully be formulated as specific targets within national and subnational plans for educational development. Such targets usually (i) specify expected attainments and outcomes in reference to terminal performance specifications within an appropriate time-frame, (ii) specify priority categories (e.g., the poor, the disabled), and (iii) are formulated in terms such that progress towards them can be observed and measured. These targets represent a "floor" (but not a "ceiling") for the continued development of education programmes and services.
6. Time-bound targets convey a sense of urgency and serve as a reference against which indices of implementation and accomplishment can be compared. As societal conditions change, plans and targets can be reviewed and updated. Where basic education efforts must be focussed to meet the needs of specific social groups of population categories, linking targets to such priority categories of learners can help to maintain the attention of planners, practitioners and evaluators on meeting the needs of these learners. Observable and measurable targets assist in the objective evaluation of progress.
7. Targets need not be based solely on current trends and resources. Initial targets can reflect a realistic appraisal of the possibilities presented by the *Declaration* to mobilize additional human, organizational, and financial capacities within a cooperative commitment to human development. Countries with low literacy

and school enrolment rates, and very limited national resources, will need to make hard choices in establishing national targets within a realistic timeframe.

8. Countries may wish to set their own targets for the 1990s in terms of the following proposed dimensions:
  1. Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;
  2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education or whatever higher level of education is considered as "basic" by the year 2000;
  3. Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g., 80 percent of 14 year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievements;
  4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates;
  5. Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity;
  6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change.
9. Levels of performance in the above should be established, when possible. These should be consistent with the focus of basic

education both on universalization of access and on learning acquisition, as joint and inseparable concerns. In all cases, the performance targets should include equity by gender. However, setting levels of performance and of the proportions of participants who are expected to reach these levels in specific basic education programmes must be an autonomous task of individual countries.

## **PRINCIPLES OF ACTION**

10. The first step consists in identifying, preferably through an active participatory process involving groups and the community, the traditional learning systems which exist in the society, and the actual demand for basic education services, whether expressed in terms of formal schooling or non-formal education programmes. Addressing the basic learning needs of all means: early childhood care and development opportunities; relevant, quality primary schooling or equivalent out-of-school education for children; and literacy, basic knowledge and life skills training for youth and adults. It also means capitalizing on the use of traditional and modern information media and technologies to educate the public on matters of social concern and to support basic education activities. These complementary components of basic education need to be designed to ensure equitable access, sustained participation, and effective learning achievement. Meeting basic learning needs also involves action to enhance the family and community environments for learning and to correlate basic education and the larger socio-economic context. The complementarity and synergistic effects of related human resources investments in population, health and nutrition should be recognized.
11. Because basic learning needs are complex and diverse, meeting them requires multisectoral strategies and action which are integral to overall development efforts. Many partners must join with the education authorities, teachers, and other educational personnel in developing basic education if it is to be seen, once again, as the responsibility of the entire society. This implies the active involvement of a wide range of partners - families, teachers,

- communities, private enterprises (including those involved in information and communication), government and non-governmental organizations, institutions, etc. - in planning, managing and evaluating the many forms of basic education.
12. Current practices and institutional arrangements for delivering basic education, and the existing mechanisms for co-operation in this regard, should be carefully evaluated before new institutions or mechanisms are created. Rehabilitating dilapidated schools and improving the training and working conditions of teachers and literacy workers, building on existing learning schemes, are likely to bring greater and more immediate returns on investment than attempts to start afresh.
  13. Great potential lies in possible joint actions with non-governmental organizations on all levels. These autonomous bodies, while advocating independent and critical public views, might play roles in monitoring, research, training and material production for the sake of non-formal and life-long educational processes.
  14. The primary purpose of bilateral and multilateral co-operation should appear in a true spirit of partnership - it should not be to transplant familiar models, but to help develop the endogenous capacities of national authorities and their in-country partners to meet basic learning needs effectively. Action and resources should be used to strengthen essential features of basic education services, focussing on managerial and analytical capacities, which can stimulate further developments. International co-operation and funding can be particularly valuable in supporting major reforms or sectoral adjustments, and in helping to develop and test innovative approaches to teaching and management, where new approaches need to be tried and/or extraordinary levels of expenditure are involved and where knowledge or relevant experiences elsewhere can often be useful.
  15. International co-operation should give priority to the countries currently least able to meet the basic learning needs of their populations. It should also help countries redress their internal

disparities in educational opportunity. Because two-thirds of illiterate adults and out-of-school children are female, wherever such inequities exist, a most urgent priority is to improve access to education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation.

## **1. PRIORITY ACTION AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

16. Progress in meeting the basic learning needs of all will depend ultimately on the actions taken within individual countries. While regional and international co-operation and financial assistance can support and facilitate such actions, government authorities, communities and their several in-country partners are the key agents for improvement, and national governments have the main responsibility for coordinating the effective use of internal and external resources. Given the diversity of countries' situations, capacities and development plans and goals, this *Framework* can only suggest certain areas that merit priority attention. Each country will determine for itself what specific actions beyond current efforts may be necessary in each of the following areas.

### **1.1 ASSESSING NEEDS AND PLANNING ACTION**

17. To achieve the targets set for itself, each country is encouraged to develop or update comprehensive and long-term plans of action (from local to national levels) to meet the learning needs it has defined as "basic". Within the context of existing education-sector and general development plans and strategies, a plan of action for basic education for all will necessarily be multisectoral, to guide activities in the sectors involved (e.g., education, information, communications/media, labour, agriculture, health). Models of strategic planning, by definition, vary. However, most of them involve constant adjustments among objectives, resources, actions, and constraints. At the national level, objectives are normally couched in broad terms and central government resources are also determined, while actions are taken at the local level. Thus, local plans in the same national setting will naturally differ not only in

scope but in content. National and subnational frameworks and local plans should allow for varying conditions and circumstances. These might, therefore, specify:

- studies for the evaluation of existing systems (analysis of problems, failures and success);
- the basic learning needs to be met, including cognitive skills, values, attitudes, as well as subject knowledge;
- the languages to be used in education;
- means to promote the demand for, broadscale participation in, basic education;
- modalities to mobilize family and local community support;
- targets and specific objectives;
- the required capital and recurrent resources, duly costed, as well as possible measures for cost effectiveness;
- indicators and procedures to be used to monitor progress in reaching the targets;
- priorities for using resources and for developing services and programmes over time;
- the priority groups that require special measures;
- the kinds of expertise required to implement the plan;
- institutional and administrative arrangements needed;
- modalities for ensuring information sharing among formal and other basic education programmes; and
- an implementation strategy and timetable.

#### *1.2 DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE POLICY ENVIRONMENT*

18. A multisectoral plan of action implies adjustments to sectoral policies so that sectors interact in a mutually supportive and beneficial manner in line with the country's overall development

goals. Action to meet basic learning needs should be an integral part of a country's national and subnational development strategies, which should reflect the priority given to human development. Legislative and other measures may be needed to promote the facilitate cooperation among the various partners involved. Advocacy and public information about basic education are important in creating a supportive policy environment at national, subnational and local levels.

19. Four specific steps that merit attention are : (i) initiation of national and subnational level activities to create a broad, public recommitment to the goal of education for all; (ii) reduction of inefficiency in the public sector and exploitative practices in the private sector; (iii) provision of improved training for public administrators and of incentives to retain qualified women and men in public service; and (iv) provision of measures to encourage wider participation in the design and implementation of basic education programmes.

### *1.3 DESIGNING POLICIES TO IMPROVE BASIC EDUCATION*

20. The preconditions for educational quality, equity and efficiency, are set in the early childhood years, making attention to early childhood care and development essential to the achievement of basic education goals. Basic education must correspond to actual needs, interests, and problems of the participants in the learning process. The relevance of curricula could be enhanced by linking literacy and numeracy skills and scientific concepts with learners' concerns and earlier experiences, for example, nutrition, health, and work. While many needs vary considerably within and among countries, and therefore much of a curriculum, should be sensitive to local conditions, there are also many universal needs and shared concerns which should be addressed in education curricula and in educational messages. Issues such as protecting the environment, achieving a balance between population and resources, slowing the spread of AIDS, and preventing drug abuse are everyone's issues.

- 21 Specific strategies addressed to improve the conditions of schooling may focus on: learners and the learning process, personnel (teachers, administrators, others), curriculum and learning assessment, materials and physical facilities. Such strategies should be conducted in an integrated manner; their design, management, and evaluation should take into account the acquisition of knowledge and problem solving skills as well as the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of human development. Depending on the outcomes desired, teachers have to be trained accordingly, whilst benefiting from in-service programmes as well as other incentives of opportunity which put a premium on the achievement of these outcomes; curriculum and assessment must reflect a variety of criteria while materials - and conceivably buildings and facilities as well - must be adapted along the same lines. In some countries, the strategy may include ways to improve conditions for teaching and learning such that absenteeism is reduced and learning time increased. In order to meet the educational needs of groups not covered by formal schooling, appropriate strategies are needed for non-formal education. These include, but go far beyond, the aspects described above, and may also give special attention to the need for coordination with other forms of education, to the support of all interested partners, to sustained financial resources and to full community participation. An example for such an approach applied to literacy can be found in UNESCO's *Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000*. Other strategies still may rely on the media to meet the broader education needs of the entire community. Such strategies need to be linked to formal education, non-formal education or a combination of both. The use of the communications media holds a tremendous potential to educate the public and to share important information among those who need to know.
22. Expanding access to basic education of satisfactory quality is an effective way to improve equity. Ensuring that girls and women stay involved in basic education activities until they have attained at least the agreed necessary level of learning, can be encouraged through special measures designed, wherever possible, in

consultation with them. Similar approaches are necessary to expand learning opportunities for various disadvantaged groups.

23. Efficiency in basic education does not mean providing education at the lowest cost, but rather the most effective use of all resources (human, organizational, and financial) to produce the desired levels of access and of necessary learning achievement. The foregoing considerations of relevance, quality, and equity are not alternatives to efficiency but represent the specific conditions within which efficiency should be attained. For some programmes, efficiency will require more, not fewer, resources. However, if existing resources can be used by more learners or if the same learning targets can be reached at a lower cost per learner, then the capacity of basic education to meet the targets of access and achievement for presently underserved groups can be increased.

#### *1.4 IMPROVING MANAGERIAL, ANALYTICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITIES*

24. Many kinds of expertise and skills will be needed to carry out these initiatives. Managerial and supervisory personnel, as well as planners, school architects, teacher educators, curriculum developers, researchers, analysts, etc., are important for any strategy to improve basic education, but many countries do not provide specialized training to prepare them for their responsibilities; this is especially true in literacy and other out-of-school basic education activities. A broadening of outlook toward basic education will be a crucial prerequisite to the effective co-ordination of efforts among these many participants, and strengthening and developing capacities for planning and management at regional and local levels with a greater sharing of responsibilities will be necessary in many countries. Pre and in-service training programmes for key personnel should be initiated, or strengthened where they do exist. Such training can be particularly useful in introducing administrative reforms and innovative management and supervisory techniques.
25. The technical services and mechanisms to collect, process and analyze data pertaining to basic education can be improved in all

countries. This is an urgent task in many countries that have little reliable information and/or research on the basic learning needs of their people and on existing basic education activities. A country's information and knowledge base is vital in preparing and implementing a plan of action. One major implication of the focus on learning acquisition is that systems have to be developed and improved to assess the performance of individual learners and delivery mechanism. Process and outcome assessment data should serve as the core of a management information system for basic education.

26. The quality and delivery of basic education can be enhanced through the judicious use of instructional technologies. Where such technologies are not widely used, their introduction will require the selection and/or development of suitable technologies, acquisition of the necessary equipment and operating systems, and the recruitment or training of teachers and other educational personnel to work with them. The definition of a suitable technology varies by societal characteristics and will change rapidly over time as new technologies (educational radio and television, computers, and various audio-visual instructional devices) become less expensive and more adaptable to a range of environments. The use of modern technology can also improve the management of basic education. Each country may reexamine periodically its present and potential technological capacity in relation to its basic educational needs and resources.

#### *1.5 MOBILIZING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS*

27. New possibilities are emerging which already show a powerful impact on meeting basic learning needs, and it is clear that the educational potential of these new possibilities has barely been tapped. These new possibilities exist largely as a result of two converging forces, both recent by-products of the general development process. First, the quantity of information available in the world - much of it relevant to survival and basic well-

being - is exponentially greater than that available only a few years ago, and the rate of its growth is accelerating. A synergistic effect occurs when important information is coupled with a second modern advance - the new capacity to communicate among the people of the world. The opportunity exists to harness this force and use it positively, consciously, and with design, in order to contribute to meeting defined learning needs.

#### **1.6 BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND MOBILIZING RESOURCES**

28. In designing the plan of action and creating a supportive policy environment for promoting basic education, maximum use of opportunities should be considered to expand existing collaborations and to bring together new partners: e.g., family and community organizations, non-governmental and other voluntary associations, teachers' unions, other professional groups, employers, the media, political parties, co-operatives, universities, research institutions, religious bodies, as well as education authorities and other government departments and services (labour, agriculture, health, information, commerce, industry, defence, etc.). The human and organizational resources these domestic partners represent need to be effectively mobilized to play their parts in implementing the plan of action. Partnerships at the community level and at the intermediate and national levels should be encouraged; they can help harmonize activities, utilize resources more effectively, and mobilize additional financial and human resources where necessary.
29. Government and their partners can analyze the current allocation and use of financial and other resources for education and training in different sectors to determine if additional support for basic education can be obtained by (i) improving efficiency, (ii) mobilizing additional sources of funding within and outside the government budget, and (iii) allocating funds within existing education and training budgets, taking into account efficiency and equity concerns. Countries where the total fiscal support for education is low need to explore the possibility of reallocating some public funds used for other purposes to basic education.

30. Assessing the resources actually or potentially available for basic education and comparing them to the budget estimates underlying the plan of action can help identify possible inadequacies of resources that may affect the scheduling of planned activities over time or may require choices to be made. Countries that require external assistance to meet the basic learning needs of their people can use the resource assessment and plan of action as a basis for discussions with their international partners and for coordinating external funding.
31. The individual learners themselves constitute a vital human resource that needs to be mobilized. The demand for, and participation in, learning opportunities cannot simply be assumed, but must be actively encouraged. Potential learners need to see that the benefits of basic education activities exceed to costs the participants must bear, such as earnings foregone and reduced time available for community and household activities and for leisure. Women and girls, especially, may be deterred from taking full advantage of basic education opportunities because of reasons specific to individual cultures. Such barriers to participation may be overcome through the use of incentives and by programmes adapted to the local context and seen by the learners, their families and communities to be "productive activities". Also, learners tend to benefit more from education when they are partners in the instructional process, rather than treated simply as "inputs" or "beneficiaries". Attention to the issues of demand and participation will help assure that the learners' personal capacities are mobilized for education.
32. Family resources, including time and mutual support, are vital for the success of basic education activities. Families can be offered incentives and assistance to ensure that their resources are invested to enable all family members to benefit as fully and equitably as possible from basic education opportunities.
33. The preeminent role of teachers as well as of other educational personnel in providing quality basic education needs to be recognized and developed to optimize their contribution. This

must entail measures to respect teachers' trade union rights and professional freedoms, and to improve their working conditions and status, notably in respect to their recruitment, initial and in-service training, remuneration and career development possibilities, as well as to allow teachers to fulfill their aspirations, social obligations, and ethical responsibilities.

34. In partnerships with school and community workers, libraries need to become a vital link in providing educational resources for all learners - pre-school through adulthood - in school and non-school settings. There is, therefore, a need to recognize libraries as invaluable information resources.
35. Community associations, co-operatives, religious bodies, and other non-governmental organizations also play important roles in supporting and in providing basic education. Their experience, expertise, energy and direct relationships with various constituencies are valuable resources for identifying and meeting basic learning needs. Their active involvement in partnerships for basic education should be promoted through policies and mechanisms that strengthen their capacities and recognize their autonomy.

## **2. PRIORITY ACTION AT REGIONAL LEVEL**

36. Basic learning needs must be met through collaborative action within each country, but there are many forms of co-operation between countries with similar conditions and concerns that could, and do, assist in this endeavour. Regions have already developed plans, such as the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources, adopted by ESCAP in 1988. By exchanging information and experience, pooling expertise, sharing facilities, and undertaking joint activities, several countries, working together, can increase their resource base and lower costs to their mutual benefit. Such arrangements are often set up among neighbouring countries (sub-regional), among all countries in a major geo-cultural region, or among countries sharing a common language or having cultural

and commercial relations. Regional and international organizations often play an important role in facilitating such co-operation between countries. In the following discussion, all such arrangements are included in the term "regional". In general, existing regional partnerships will need to be strengthened and provided with the resources necessary for their effective functioning in helping countries meet the basic learning needs of their populations.

### *2.1 EXCHANGING INFORMATION, EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE*

37. Various regional mechanisms, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, promote co-operation in education and training, health, agricultural development, research and information, communications, and in other fields relevant to meeting basic learning needs. Such mechanisms can be further developed in response to the evolving needs of their constituents. Among several possible examples are the four regional programmes established through UNESCO in the 1980s to support national efforts to achieve universal primary education and eliminate adult illiteracy :
  - Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean;
  - Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa;
  - Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL);
  - Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Arab States by the Year 2000 (ARABUPEAL).
38. In addition to the technical and policy consultations organized in connection with these programmes, other existing mechanisms can be used for consulting on policy issues in basic education. The conferences of ministers of education organized by UNESCO

and by several regional organizations, the regular sessions of the regional commissions of the United Nations, and certain trans-regional conferences organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat, CONFEMEN (standing conference of ministers of education of francophone countries), the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), could be used for this purpose as needs arise. In addition, numerous conferences and meetings organized by non-governmental bodies provide opportunities for professionals to share information and views on technical and policy issues. The conveners of these various conferences and meetings may consider ways of extending participation, where appropriate, to include representatives of other constituencies engaged in meeting basic learning needs.

39. Full advantage should be taken of opportunities to share media messages or programmes that can be exchanged among countries or collaboratively developed, especially where language and cultural similarities extend beyond political boundaries.

## *2.2 UNDERTAKING JOINT ACTIVITIES*

40. There are many possible joint activities among countries in support of national efforts to implement action plans for basic education. Joint activities should be designed to exploit economies of scale and the comparative advantages of participating countries. Six areas where this form of regional collaboration seems particularly appropriate are : (i) training of key personnel; such as planners, managers, teacher educators, researchers, etc; (ii) efforts to improve information collection and analysis; (iii) research; (iv) production of educational materials; (v) use of communication media to meet basic learning needs; and (vi) management and use of distance education services. Here, too, there are several existing mechanisms that could be utilized to foster such activities, including UNESCO's International Institute of Educational Planning and its networks of trainees and research as well as IBE's information network and the UNESCO Institute for Education; the five networks for

educational innovation operating under UNESCO's auspices; the research and review advisory groups (RRAGs) associated with the International Development Research Centre; the Commonwealth of Learning; the Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO; the participatory network established by the International Council for Adult Education; and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, which links major national research institutions in some 35 countries. Certain multilateral and bilateral development agencies that have accumulated valuable experience in one or more of these areas might be interested in participating in joint activities. The five United Nations regional commissions could provide further support to such regional collaboration, especially by mobilizing policymakers to take appropriate action.

### **3. PRIORITY ACTION AT WORLD LEVEL**

41. The world community has a well-established record of co-operation in education and development. However, international funding for education stagnated during the early 1980s; at the same time, many countries have been handicapped by growing debt burdens and economic relationships that channel their financial and human resources to wealthier countries. Because concern about issues in basic education is shared by industrialized and developing countries alike, international co-operation can provide valuable support for national efforts and regional actions to implement the expanded vision of basic Education for All. Time, energy, and funding directed to basic education are perhaps the most profound investment in people and in the future of a country which can be made; there is a clear need and strong moral and economic argument for international solidarity to provide technical co-operation and financial assistance to countries that lack the resources to meet the basic learning needs of their populations.

#### **3.1 COOPERATION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT**

42. Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal

human responsibility. The prospects for meeting basic learning needs around the world are determined in part by the dynamics of international relations and trade. With the current relaxation of tensions and the decreasing number of armed conflicts, there are now real possibilities to reduce the tremendous waste of military spending and shift those resources into socially useful areas, including basic education. The urgent task of meeting basic learning needs may require such a reallocation between sectors, and the world community and individual governments need to plan this conversion of resources for peaceful uses with courage and vision, and in a thoughtful and careful manner. Similarly, international measures to reduce or eliminate current imbalances in trade relations and to reduce debt burdens must be taken to enable many low-income countries to rebuild their own economies, releasing and retaining human and financial resources needed for development and for providing basic education to their populations. Structural adjustment policies should protect appropriate funding levels for education.

### ***3.2 ENHANCING NATIONAL CAPACITIES***

43. International support should be provided, on request, to countries seeking to develop the national capacities needed for planning and managing basic education programmes and services (see section 1.4). Ultimate responsibility rests within each nation to design and manage its own programmes to meet the learning needs of all its population. International support could include training and institutional development in data collection, analysis and research, technological innovation, and educational methodologies. Management information systems and other modern management methods could also be introduced, with an emphasis on low and middle level managers. These capabilities will be even more in demand to support quality improvements in primary education and to introduce innovative out-of-school programmes. In addition to direct support to countries and institutions, international assistance can also be usefully channelled to support the activities of international, regional and other inter-country structures that organize joint research, training and information exchanges. The

latter should be based on, and supported by, existing institutions and programmes, if need be improved and strengthened, rather than on the establishment of new structures. Support will be especially valuable for technical cooperation among developing countries, among whom both circumstances and resources available to respond to circumstances are often similar.

### **3.3 PROVIDING SUSTAINED LONG TERM SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTIONS**

44. Meeting the basic learning needs of all people in all countries is obviously a long-term undertaking. This Framework provides guidelines for preparing national and subnational plans of action for the development of basic education through a long-term commitment of governments and their national partners to work together to reach the targets and achieve the objectives they set for themselves. International agencies and institutions, many of which are sponsors, co-sponsors, and associate sponsors of the World Conference on Education for All, shosuld actively seek to plan together and sustain their long-term support for the kinds of national and regional actions outlined in the preceding sections. In particular, the core sponsors of the Education for All initiative (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) affirm their commitments to supporting the priority areas for international action presented below and to making appropriate arrangements for meeting the objectives of Education for All, each acting within its mandate, special responsibilities, and decisions of its governing bodies. Given that UNESCO is the UN agency with a particular responsibility for education, it will give priority to implementing the *Framework for Action* and to facilitating provision of services needed for reinforced international co-ordination and co-operation.
45. Increased international funding is needed to help the less developed countries implement their own autonomous plans of action in line with the expanded vision of basic Education for All. Genuine partnerships characterized by co-operation and joint long-term commitments will accomplish more and provide the basis for a

substantial increase in overall funding for this important sub-sectors of education. Upon governments' request, multilateral and bilateral agencies should focus on supporting priority actions, particularly at the country level (see section 1), in areas such as the following:

- a. *The design or updating of national and subnational multisectoral plans of action* (see section 1.1), which will need to be elaborated very early in the 1990s. Both financial and technical assistance are needed by many developing countries, particularly in collecting and analyzing data, as well as in organizing domestic consultations.
- b. *National efforts and related inter-country co-operation to attain a satisfactory level of quality and relevance in primary education* (cf. sections 1.3 and 2 above). Experiences involving the participation of families, local communities, and non-governmental organizations in increasing the relevance and improving the quality of education could profitably be shared among countries.
- c. *The provision of universal primary education in the economically poorer countries.* International funding agencies should consider negotiating arrangements to provide long-term support, on a case-by-case basis, to help countries move toward universal primary education according to their timetable. The external agencies should examine current assistance practices in order to find ways of effectively assisting basic education programmes which do not require capital- and technology-intensive assistance, but often need longer-term budgetary support. In this context, greater attention should be given to criteria for development co-operation in education to include more than mere economic considerations.
- d. *Programmes designed to meet the basic learning needs of disadvantaged groups, out-of-school youth, and adults with little or no access to basic learning opportunities.* All partners can share their experience and expertise in designing and implementing innovative measures and activities, and focus

- their funding for basic education on specific categories and groups (e.g., women, the rural poor, the disabled) to improve significantly the learning opportunities and conditions available for them.
- e. *Education programmes for women and girls.* These programmes should be designed to eliminate the social and cultural barriers which have discouraged or even excluded women and girls from benefits of regular education programmes, as well as to promote equal opportunities in all aspects of their lives.
  - f. *Education programmes for refugees.* The programmes run by such organizations as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA) need more substantial and reliable long-term financial support for this recognized international responsibility. Where countries of refuge need international financial and technical assistance to cope with the basic needs of refugees including their learning needs, the international community can help to share this burden through increased cooperation. The world community will also endeavour to ensure that people under occupation or displaced by war and other calamities continue to have access to basic education programmes that preserve their cultural identity.
  - g. *Basic education programmes of all kinds in countries with high rates of illiteracy (as in sub-Saharan Africa) and with large illiterate populations (as in South Asia).* Substantial assistance will be needed to reduce significantly the world's large number of illiterate adults.
  - h. *Capacity building for research and planning and the experimentation of small-scale innovations.* The success of Education for All actions will ultimately be determined by the capacity of each country to design and implement programs that reflect national conditions. A strengthened knowledge base nourished by research findings and the lessons of

experiments and innovations as well as the availability of competent educational planners will be essential in this respect.

46. The coordination of external funding for education is an area of shared responsibility at country level, in which host governments need to take the lead to ensure the efficient use of resources in accordance with their priorities. Development funding agencies should explore innovative and more flexible modalities of cooperation in consultation with the governments and institutions with which they work and co-operate in regional initiatives, such as the Task Force of Donors to African Education. Other forums need to be developed in which funding agencies and developing countries can collaborate in the design of inter-country projects and discuss general issues relating to financial assistance.

### *3.4 CONSULTATIONS ON POLICY ISSUES*

47. Existing channels of communication and forums for consultation among the many partners involved in meeting basic learning needs should be fully utilized in the 1990s to maintain the extend the international consensus underlying this *Framework for Action*. Some channels and forums, such as the biannual International Conference on Education, operate globally, while others focus on particular regions or groups of countries or categories of partners. Insofar as possible, organizers should seek to coordinate these consultations and share results.
48. Moreover, in order to maintain and expand the Education for All initiative, the international community will need to make appropriate arrangements, which will ensure co-operation among the interested agencies using the existing mechanisms insofar as possible : (i) to continue advocacy of basic Education for All, building on the momentum generated by the World Conference; (ii) to facilitate sharing information on the progress made in achieving basic education targets set by countries for themselves and on the resources and organizational requirements for successful initiatives; (iii) to encourage new partners to join this global endeavour; and

(iv) to ensure that all partners are fully aware of the importance of maintaining strong support for basic education.

## **INDICATIVE PHASING OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE 1990s**

49. Each country, in determining its own intermediate goals and targets and in designing its plan of action for achieving them, will, in the process, establish a timetable to harmonize and schedule specific activities. Similarly, regional and international action will need to be scheduled to help countries meet their targets on time. The following general schedule suggests an indicative phasing during the 1990s; of course, certain phases may need to overlap and the dates indicated will need to be adapted to individual country and organizational contexts.

1. Governments and organizations set specific targets and complete or update their plans of action to meet basic learning needs (cf. section 1.1); take measures to create a supportive policy environment (1.2); devise policies to improve the relevance, quality, equity and efficiency of basic education services and programmes (1.3); design the means to adapt information and communication media to meet basic learning needs (1.4) and mobilize resources and establish operational partnerships (1.6). International partners assist countries, through direct support and through regional co-operation, to complete this preparatory stage. (1990-1991)
2. Development agencies establish policies and plans for the 1990s, in line with their commitments to sustained, long-term support for national and regional actions and increase their financial and technical assistance to basic education accordingly (3.3). All partners strengthen and use relevant existing mechanisms for consultation and co-operation and establish procedures for monitoring progress at regional and international levels. (1990-1993)

3. First stage of implementation of plans of action: national coordinating bodies monitor implementation and propose appropriate adjustments to plans. Regional and international supporting actions are carried out. (1990-1995)
4. Governments and organizations undertake mid-term evaluation of the implementation of their respective plans and adjust them as needed. Governments, organizations and development agencies undertake comprehensive policy reviews at regional and global levels. (1995-1996)
5. Second stage of implementation of plans of action and of supporting action at regional and international levels. Development agencies adjust their plans as necessary and increase their assistance to basic education accordingly. (1996-2000)
6. Governments, organizations and development agencies evaluate achievements and undertake comprehensive policy review at regional and gloabl levels. (2000-2001)
50. There will never be a better time to renew commitment to the inevitable and long-term effort to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. This effort will require a much greater and wiser investment of resources in basic education and training than ever before, but benefits will begin accruing immediately and will extend well into the future - where the global challenges of today will be met, in good measure, by the world community's commitment and perseverance in attaining its goal of education for all.



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